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Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

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Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

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Note by the Secretary-General

In its resolution 1997/67 of 25 July 1995, entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, through the Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/207 of 18 December 1997, reiterated the request for a report. The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the members of the Assembly and the Council the annexed report, covering the period from June 1997 to May 1998, which was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

* A/53/50.
** E/1998/100.

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Annex

Report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/207 of 18 December 1997, aware of the additional, detrimental economic and social impact of the Israeli settlements on Palestinian and other Arab natural resources, especially the confiscation of land and the forced diversion of water resources, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and on the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/52/172-E/1997/71 and Corr.1), reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in response to that request and covers developments through May 1998.

II. Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation

2. The stalling peace process has caused severe hardships to the Palestinians in the occupied territory as well as to the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan. Israeli occupation policies and closures of the occupied territories continued to aggravate the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

3. Israeli settlements have been built at some 200 sites seized by civilian and military bodies representing the Government of Israel, as well as by Israeli civilians empowered by Israel to undertake such activity. The land under exclusive Israeli control amounts to about 72 per cent of the West Bank (area C) and 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip. In addition, 30 per cent of the area of East Jerusalem is under effective Israeli ownership. No similar estimates are available for the Golan Heights, where some 15,000 inhabitants of Syrian nationality are living in a few villages close to the Syrian-Lebanese border.[1]

4. Israel has established approximately 150 settlements in the West Bank, with a civilian population of 170,000; in East Jerusalem, approximately 180,000 Israelis are resident; in the Gaza Strip, 5,500 settlers live in 16 settlements; and in the Golan Heights, 15,000 settlers reside in 36 settlements. By the end of 1998, more than 350,000 Israelis will be living in over 200 communities established since 1967 in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.[2]

5. The Jabal Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) project represents a specific example of this policy. Although Israel's decision to establish the new settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim is considered a violation of international law and the agreements and understandings reached regarding Jerusalem, the present Government has declared that it has no intention of halting or suspending the project. It is intended to become one of the largest settlement projects initiated to date. It is located south of Jerusalem and overlooks the cities of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour. The area of the land set aside for the project amounts to 1,850 dunums (a dunum is equal to approximately 1,000 square metres); the master plan covers an area of 2,056 dunums. In the first stage, this settlement is expected to accommodate 4,000 settlers in 1,000 housing units, gradually increasing to 30,000 settlers occupying some 6,500 units in the final stage.[3]

6. The second half of 1997 witnessed an explosion in building construction throughout the occupied territories. New construction has been observed at 93 of the 130 settlements in the West Bank, in settlements close to Jerusalem, as well as isolated posts in the West Bank heartland. Because of their distance from existing facilities, at least 13 of these construction sites could be characterized as new settlements, although they are considered by Israel to be part of existing settlements. Press reports in Israel place the number of new units under construction at 5,000 during 1997. Other sources have confirmed the approval and initial construction of 4,000 units in West Bank settlements, enough to increase the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by more than 10 per cent. There are currently more than 160,000 Israelis living in 45,000 units in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[4]

7. The situation of Israeli settlements expansion in the occupied territories, at the end of 1997, could be summarized as follows:

A. Settler population

West Bank: 165,000
Gaza Strip: 5,500
Golan Heights: 15,000
East Jerusalem: 180,000

B. Settlement expansion

New settlement areas established: 13
New dwellings begun in settlements: 4,500-5,000

C. Number of new dwellings formally approved

(August 1996-March 1998): 2,268

D. Number of units sold in West Bank settlements: 1,560

E. Number of units completed in West Bank settlements: 4,000

F. Total lands confiscated in 1997: 25,000 dunums

Bypass roads: 4,951 dunums
New settlements: 723 dunums
Settlement expansion: 14,784
Industrial settlements: 4,480

G. Palestinian homes demolished by the Israel Defence Forces, area C: 233 in 1997

290 from January 1997 to March 1998

Sources: Foundation for Middle East Peace. *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., March 1998), pp. 1-2; Khalil Tufakji, Orient House; Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, e-mail communication, 24 April 1998.

8. The plans of the Ministry of Housing and Construction for 1998 include tendering land for the first 1,000 units to be built in the settlement of Har Homa, as well as 820 units in the "greater Jerusalem" settlement of Givat Ze'ev. These allocations are part of a 1998 programme to tender more than 27 per cent of the national total of 23,000 units in land occupied in 1967, a goal which, if implemented, will indicate a significant campaign of intended settlement expansion.[4]

9. Settlement expansion in the West Bank appears to be occurring not only in those settlements within easy commuting distance of Jerusalem and the Tel Aviv metropolis, but also in the rural, isolated outposts throughout the West Bank. The increasing dependence on market forces in the housing market appears not to have stopped the expansion of settlements in these latter areas.

10. Since 1967, only 12 per cent of all new construction in Jerusalem has taken place in the Arab sector. During the period 1977-1983, for example, 90 per cent of construction was for Israelis. The figure translates into an annual pace of apartment construction of 2,170 for Israelis and only 230 for Palestinians. Housing construction for Israelis in East Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, has been critical to the overall growth of the city. The 180,000 Israelis who today live in this area comprise 76 per cent of the total increase in Jerusalem's Jewish population since 1967.[5]

11. Government restrictions on Palestinian housing construction, and the complementary boom in Israeli construction that has seen more than 40,000 apartment units built in East Jerusalem settlement communities, have ensured that Palestinians today comprise no greater a share of the city's population than they did in 1967. An additional 46,300 housing units are planned for the entire city. Out of these, about 10,000 will be built on 14,000 dunums (3,500 acres) of Israeli territory included in West Jerusalem in May 1996. An additional 17,710 units will be located in East Jerusalem settlement communities.[6]

12. The "urban sprawl" evident in the new Israeli neighbourhoods and settlements built within the municipal boundary of East Jerusalem since 1967 provides a yardstick to measure Israel's intention to maintain its exclusive sovereign hold over Jerusalem.

13. The settlements established in East Jerusalem after 1967 serve as a springboard for large-scale expansion of similar Israeli settlement suburbs in a second West Bank ring around all of East Jerusalem, beyond the city itself to the area around Jerusalem, strategically positioned between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

14. During the next 15 years, the outer ring of settlements of greater Jerusalem can be expected to accommodate more than 200,000 new settlers, in addition to the 50,000 currently residing there. During this period, completion of the Israeli suburban sections within Jerusalem itself (Har Homa and other locations) is expected to increase the number of East Jerusalem's 180,000 Israeli citizens to at least 250,000. In that sense, settlement expansion in East Jerusalem continues to play a crucial role in offsetting Palestinian population growth. This increase in Israel's settler population will bring the total number of Israeli settlers in and around Arab East Jerusalem by the year 2015 to 500,000. The Palestinian population is expected to double over the same period, to 1.5

million within greater Jerusalem and to 1 million in the metropolitan region.[7]

15. The scheme[8] for development of this area has significance beyond the territorial area that it encompasses, demonstrating the degree to which settlement expansion has been integrated into Israel's national planning schemes. E-1 controls the main axis of socio-economic development for Israel itself, as outlined in Israel's metropolitan master plan, completed in 1994-1995. This critical area runs along the trajectory of road 45, which originates in greater Tel Aviv and leads via Ben Gurion Airport – with expansion planned in conjunction with large industrial zones around the new city of Modi'in to greater Jerusalem at the West Bank settlement of Givat Ze'ev. The road continues along the recently developed archeological site next to the Prophet Samuel's tomb – to be surrounded at a distance by gentrified housing estates – and passes the East Jerusalem settlement community of Ramot and the expanding high-technology industrial park of Har Hotzvim to arrive at the projected "Eastern Gate" settlement site in East Jerusalem. From there it passes to Ma'ale Adumim, with its industrial zone, also scheduled to expand greatly, and another large residential area projected at Tibek Kuteif, on the heights above the Jordan Valley.

16. In 1967, 2,300 square kilometres of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were under Palestinian cultivation. In 1989, the figure had been reduced to 1,945 square kilometres, or 31.5 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Agriculture comprised 24 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1966, the same percentage as in the period 1980-1985. By 1994, the percentage had decreased to less than 15 per cent.[9] In 1966, the agricultural sector provided employment for 55,000, or 43 per cent of total employment, whereas in the period 1980-1985, there were 40,000 employed in the agricultural sector, comprising 24 per cent of those Palestinians employed.[10] In 1993, the percentage of employed persons working in agriculture was 22 per cent.[11]

17. These gross indicators, however, cannot lead to any specific conclusions regarding the real effect of settlements on agricultural employment or production, or land under cultivation. Settlements are only one of a number of variables that must be considered when assessing these trends.

18. In this context, there are regions such as the Jordan Valley where a direct link can be established between the loss of Palestinians' agricultural opportunities and Israeli settlements. Contamination by sewage also directly affects Palestinian agriculture, albeit on a smaller scale, in the region around Kiryat Arba near Hebron. The confiscation of agricultural lands and their transfer to settlements, which has occurred on numerous occasions, may well result in loss of agricultural income and employment, though this has never been quantified beyond anecdotal reporting. There are also costs associated with Israeli-owned industries in the occupied territories, such as a recycling plant for used motor oil, stone quarries and other plants where harmful and toxic by-products are produced.

19. Limited access to water remains the greatest obstacle to Palestinian agricultural development. According to a recent report by Miriam Lowi for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, almost the entire increase in Israeli water use since 1967 derives from the waters of the West Bank and the upper Jordan River.[12] However, Israel is today in the midst of a water emergency. Even with the resources conquered in 1967, it is pumping more water from aquifers than nature can replace. And in the West Bank, not only is Israel exploiting water for its own population in Israel and the occupied territories, amounting to 15 per cent of total consumption, it is also preventing the Palestinian community from increasing its water use to barely 20 per cent beyond the amount used in 1967, and only for personal use, not for agriculture and economic development. "The status quo", wrote Leopold Laufer in a recent report for an Israeli think tank, "has effectively barred economic development in the territories and in Gaza".[13]

20. In both the bilateral and multilateral negotiations which began in Madrid, Israel has sought to protect its continuing control over this resource in the West Bank, which was described by Israel's State Comptroller in February 1993 as the principal reservoir of drinking water for the Dan region, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Beersheba, and the most important long-term source in the national water system.[13]

21. The water requirements of Israel's settlements in the occupied territories are a small segment of this larger mosaic of Israeli exploitation of the water resources in the occupied territories.

22. At a time when settlers were barely 10 per cent of the Palestinian population in the West Bank (1987), Palestinian consumption totalled 115 cm^3 while settler consumption equalled 97 cm^3.[14] A report by Peace Now noted that the Jewish settlers' per capita irrigated areas are 7 and 13 times larger than the areas accorded to the Palestinians for irrigation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, respectively.[14]

23. A report prepared by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center in November 1992 notes that lack of water has forced Palestinian farmers to remove tracts from cultivation and that the digging of new deep wells for

settlements, particularly in the Jordan Valley, has caused subsequent shortages for Palestinian farmers.[15]

24. There are approximately 260 Israeli-owned industrial concerns in the West Bank. For Israeli industrialists, the West Bank has, at least in one sphere, enjoyed a comparative advantage over Israel.[16] Environmental regulations on soil, air and water quality, and restrictions on industrial development, have generally been far less comprehensive and much less enforced in the occupied territories compared to Israel proper. Combined with state-subsidized incentives for Israeli concerns to locate to industrial parks in and nearby settlements, the relative laxity of environmental enforcement and monitoring has led to the relocation of polluting industries into the occupied territories.

25. The factories posing an environmental risk generally utilize wet processes in the industrial sectors of packaged food, manufacturing, metal coating and textiles.[17]

26. The Shomron Municipal Environmental Association, a governmental body established by settlements in the northern part of the West Bank to monitor and improve environmental quality, acknowledges that "waste-water effluents from these plants and from nearly 100 residential communities in our region, if not properly treated, pose a threat to the groundwater quality in the region. In addition, industrial air emissions and noise generation can be problematic at some factories".[18]

27. There are 45 concerns operating in the industrial park of Burkan adjacent to the settlement of Ariel. Most are engaged in the production of fabric and plastics for export. The owners of these factories escape the tighter rules on health and the environment inside Israel itself to work in the West Bank where they get tax breaks.[19] In addition to Burkan, Palestinians have complained about the operation of industrial facilities at Ariel, Karne Shomron, Kiryat Arba, and Adumim.[20] Of particular concern is the effect of industrial development on the quality of groundwater, which Palestinian investigators have found to be "significantly more polluted" near settlements than elsewhere.[20]

28. The settlement of Kiryat Arba has been identified by Palestinian investigators as "the main source of pollution in the Hebron area".[21] A tile factory located in the settlement's industrial area was flushing its wastewater through the sewage system, resulting in numerous problems. The city of Hebron successfully petitioned the court to stop this practice. The wastewater is now trucked off in tanks and dumped on Palestinian fields.[21] The water contains high levels of calcium carbonate, increasing the already high pH level of the land.

29. Geshurei Industries, a manufacturer of pesticides and fertilizers, was originally located in the Israeli town of Kfar Saba. Public concern about the environmental effects of the factory – on land, public health and agriculture – resulted in an Israeli court order in 1982 closing the plant. Since 1987, the factory has been operating across the Green Line, in Tulkarm, where there are effectively no controls on waste disposal or air pollution. Other Israeli industrial polluters, including those working in the fields of asbestos, fibreglass, pesticides and flammable gases, also relocated to the Tulkarm area. According to a report by the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, the factory pollution directly affects 144 dunums of prime agricultural land and causes substantial damage to the public health.[22] The Israeli court has ordered some remedial action, including compensation to affected farmers, but the plant remains in operation.

30. The same report notes severe negative effects of the factory operation on the nearby community, including decay of a majority of trees and other vegetation around the plant, chemical dust and residue and a liquid substance causing a decrease in productivity in field and hot house agriculture, and factory by-products, including sodium and salt, prominent in soil samples of land found to be non-arable. These effects are a consequence of factory by-products and waste-water contamination of agricultural land.

31. The report further points to clear evidence of polluting groundwater through leakage of chemicals, and proof of the improper disposal of wastes and by products.[22]

32. The report also documented a very high ratio of health-related problems among farmers and people living around the factory, including severe headaches, itchy eyes, spastic and chronic coughs and bronchial asthma.[22] The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture notes that the public health of the community has not been well-documented owing to decades of military occupation and direct conflict, suggesting that environmentally related health problems may be more pervasive than currently estimated. The long-term impact on soil and groundwater has similarly received inadequate attention.[23]

33. As a consequence of the harmful effects of Israeli-operated industry around Tulkarm, the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture estimated that 17 per cent of Tulkarm's agricultural land has been affected by pollution originating at the six Israeli concerns that have located in the Tulkarm area. Three of the factories are sited on what Palestinians claim to be Waqf land. Other sites are claimed by private Palestinian owners. Several factories are located less than 100 metres from residential housing.[23]

34. There are hundreds of sites for the disposal of trash in the occupied territories, including dozens that are unauthorized. There are 246 sites in the West Bank north of Jerusalem alone. Most of the sites are simple, primitive sites with few if any environmental safeguards. And none is used exclusively by settlements or Palestinian communities. The Shomron Municipal Environmental Association acknowledges that the sites are improperly maintained, generating odours and smoke which are a nuisance to neighbouring residents, as well as posing a threat to groundwater quality.[24]

35. The site in Jiyous near Kalkilya is typical. Located on 12 dunums, 200 metres from the wadi that serves as a source of drinking water for the village of Azoun, the site opened in 1990. It is used principally by the settlements of Karnei Shomron, Keddu and Ma'al Shomron. The Shomron Municipal Environment Association is now being pressured by trash contractors in Israel to permit them to use the dump for trash generated in Israel, after the Israeli dump they had been using was closed by the Israeli Government.[25]

36. Sites such as the one at Jiyous are attractive trash disposal options for Israeli communities. With disposal costs three to six times greater in Israel, sites in the West Bank offer many Israeli towns a closer, cheaper alternative to dumps within Israel itself.

37. Israel conducted a geographical information system study in 1996 as part of an effort to develop a master plan to establish an order of priorities to improve and consolidate the system of trash disposal in the West Bank. The master plan for trash disposal in the West Bank is being conducted exclusively by Israel, without official or informal Palestinian participation.

38. The mitigation of environmental problems in the occupied territories, including those caused by the existence and expansion of settlements, are viewed by Israelis as a forum for joint Israeli-Palestinian action. Yet, Israeli environmental planners in the territories continue to view Palestinians as junior partners, at best. Palestinians, for their part, are willing to cooperate with Israeli communities within Israel's pre-1967 borders, but they refuse, as a matter of principle, to participate in joint efforts with settlers.[25]

39. Palestinians have traditionally made up the bulk of the workforce engaged in the construction and daily maintenance of settlements throughout the occupied territories. Some 12,000 Palestinian labourers work in Israeli settlements; 3,500 work in the Erez industrial zone and settlements in the Gaza Strip, and 8,500 in industrial parks and settlements in the West Bank[26] not including those working in the settlement communities of East Jerusalem.

40. The unemployment situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip remains critical, in particular owing to closures and increased reliance of Israel on expatriate workers from outside the region. The number of Palestinian workers in Israel dropped from an average of 120,000 on a monthly basis in 1992 to an average of about 25,000 in 1996.[27]

41. The overall economic environment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip inhibits investment and growth owing to the continued ambiguity of the legal and political situation. According to the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, "the complex overlay of laws and Israeli military orders in force during the occupation remains in place. This is further aggravated by border closures which include banning movement of goods, factors of production and people between the Palestinian areas and Israel and the Gaza Strip, and between the rest of the West Bank and Jerusalem. Closure also often entails banning movement between the West Bank, Jordan and the Gaza Strip".[28]

42. In the period 1993-1996, there were a total of 342 days of closure affecting the Gaza Strip and 291 days in the West Bank. In 1996 alone, closures increased over the year before by 57 per cent in the West Bank and 35 per cent in the Gaza Strip. The 1996 closures differed from those in preceding years in that they were in effect for much longer periods, which has a significant effect on the continuity and regularity of production, marketing, income generation and employment.[29]

43. Frequent Israeli closures have been a major factor behind the 18 per cent drop in gross national product (GNP) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the 35 per cent drop in per capita GNP between 1992 and 1996. In addition, in 1997 gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated to have grown by 1.2 per cent, down from 5.5 per cent in 1996, as estimated by the Palestinian Authority and the International Monetary Fund, while the population growth was estimated at 4.5 per cent, thus explaining the further deterioration in GDP per capita in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[30]

44. However, economic indicators show that the actual deterioration in standards of living has been far more dramatic in the West Bank, with a 19.7 per cent loss of per capita GDP compared with 8.4 per cent in the Gaza Strip in the period 1993-1995. This drop does not reflect the further deterioration, which occurred with the lengthy closures and widespread confrontations in later years.[31]

45. Frequent closures have also negatively affected trade, particularly exports from the territories, causing long delays at the border which are detrimental to export goods, particularly vegetables and fruits. In addition, the delay in arrival of raw materials from Israel to the West Bank and

Gaza Strip leads to the upsetting of production plans and to a lowering of capacity utilization.[32]

46. Bank lending and deposits in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been modest. In 1997, lending remained at about 19 per cent of the total assets, reflecting a depressed demand for credit by investors. The relatively low deposit/GDP ratio was, at the end of 1996, about 57.5 per cent. A further substantial increase in total bank deposits is not, however, expected to take place before a successful conclusion of final status negotiations. Owing to political uncertainties, many residents maintain bank accounts abroad.[33]

47. Tourism, which was one of the first economic sectors to benefit from the peace dividend as it boomed during the period 1994-1995, has been hit by the stalemate in the peace process. According to the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, "the Israeli authorities refuse to issue permits for new hotels or for expanding existing ones in East Jerusalem. This resulted in the freezing of the number of rooms at Arab-owned hotels in East Jerusalem at their 1967 level while the number of rooms at hotels operating in the rest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip declined. As a result of Israeli licensing policies, the number of Palestinian guides in East Jerusalem dropped from 154 in 1967 to 47 in 1995, and their number in the rest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was down to 24 in 1995, six of whom were newly licensed by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism. Furthermore, the fact that the Israeli authorities neglected the infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has made it difficult for the tourism sector to attract new investments".[34] Visitors to the West Bank and Gaza Strip still come through Israeli airports. Palestinian travel agents are prevented from meeting arriving clients and there are no tourist bus companies based in the West Bank outside East Jerusalem.[35]

48. While incentives and investment continued to promote the Israeli civilian presence in the Syrian Golan, the Arab population faces further deterioration in their living conditions owing to Israeli settlements, restrictions on employment opportunities and education, as well as the Israeli taxation policy.[36]

49. In the Golan Heights, there are currently 15,000 Israelis living in 33 settlement communities established in the wake of Israel's 1967 capture of the Golan Heights. The Syrian population, numbering an equal amount, resides in five villages in the Golan's north-eastern corner.[37]

50. Some 2,000 dwellings are in various stages of construction in the Golan settlements. The completion of some was frozen by previous governments. Others were rented to army officers stationed in the area. A few completed units remained empty in previous years because of the lack of demand in view of the uncertainty created by negotiations between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic over the Golan's future.[38]

51. In the months before Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu's election, this picture was already changing. After the collapse of the negotiations with the Syrian Arab Republic in February 1996, Prime Minister Shimon Peres ordered the sale of many of these apartments, and made building plots available for private construction. The last of the 700 units built during the past three years at Katzrin, the largest settlement, had already been sold. Katzrin's population grew by 50 per cent during this period, from 4,000 to 6,000. A full 20 per cent of the area's residents arrived during 1996.[39] Planning and site work for 1,000 additional units is currently under way. Some 115 new units for the Elad settlement were approved in April 1996.[40] And in May 1996, the Golan Regional Council began a drive to sell 250 units scattered throughout the area's 32 settlements.

52. Among the most prominent projects now under way are a $130 million tourism and hotel project at Hamat Gader, a deal between MacDonald's and the kibbutz settlement of Merom Golan to grow potatoes for the company's french fries on 300 dunums, and at the settlement of Ortal, a $4.5 million dairy, the largest in the Middle East.[41]

53. The election of Prime Minister Netanyahu changed the context in which Israelis evaluate the prospects of a life in the Golan. Since his victory, housing prices have appreciated by 50 per cent in some settlements. Even so, in July 1996, the United States company Office Depot pulled out of a manufacturing joint venture in the Golan Heights because of the Golan's uncertain future.

54. At meetings with Golan settlers soon after his election, the Prime Minister reiterated his commitment to increase Katzrin's population to 15,000 during his tenure. He also announced his approval of the "Golan 2000" plan presented to him before the election. The plan calls for a $202 million public sector investment in infrastructure, and new housing construction in 10 settlements, to reach the goal of increasing the plateau's Israeli population by 10,000 during the next four years.[42]

55. On 20 January 1997, construction began on 600 new units at the settlements of Hmat Ghadar, Ramot and Gamla.[43] "In fact", noted *Ma'ariv* on 30 December 1996, "we are speaking of an 'expansion plan' according to which new settlements will be established in the Golan, under the rubric of 'expanding' existing settlements".[44] Three new settlements will be established as part of the first stage of the expansion. Despite such efforts to increase the Golan settler population, by May 1996, settlement leaders were

complaining that there was an "enormous gap" between settlement plans and their actual implementation.[45]

56. At the outset of a campaign to expand residential construction and to increase the settler population – part of the "Golan 2000" programme – settlement leaders reported that the settler population in the Golan is to increase by 10,000 to more than 25,000 by the year 2000.[46]

57. Settlement leader Yehuda Wolman reported that 1,600 units had been constructed in the period 1989-1996, at a rate averaging 225 units annually. He also noted that of the 14,000 Israelis residing in the Golan, 3,000 are employed by the local government council, and one third are engaged in agriculture. In 1996, agricultural production reached $240 million, while industrial production reached $100 million, tourism $40 million, sales and services $50 million, and public services $20 million. Investment in industrial production amounted to $16 million in the period 1992-1996.[47] Settlement expansion is concentrated at the settlement of Katzrin, with a current population of 7,000, the largest among 32 Golan settlements. Three hundred new units were begun in mid-1997 and formal approval from the Minister of Defence was awaited to begin construction of an additional 1,000 units. To enable construction of the 1,000 units, the municipal area of Katzrin was expanded by 1,200 dunums bordering a nature reserve.[48]

58. For the first time since the beginning of Israeli settlement in the Golan, a private sector contractor, as opposed to government companies, undertook a residential construction project. The 300 cottages being built at Katzrin sell for $95,000 to $110,000. The State provides subsidized grants, benefits and loans comprising 90 per cent of this amount.[48] For example, beginning in October 1997, 35 building plots were marketed in the settlement of Katzrin as part of the popular "build your own house" programme. The one-half dunum plots were offered at no cost. Buyers were required to pay $10,000 towards development costs, one half the actual investment by the State. By mid-December, more than 100 prospective buyers had signed up for the 35 available lots.[49]

59. A number of incentives were adopted to attract prospective Israeli settlers into the Golan Heights, including individual grants of 50,000 shekels (equivalent to US$ 16,500) and mortgage facilities as high as 95 per cent of the value of the house, with generous repayment terms.[50] In addition, substantial state subsidies are provided in various economic sectors to strengthen the Israeli settlements policy. This includes an ongoing plan for the development of tourism in the Golan Heights, which is estimated at about US$ 5.5 million. Of that sum, $4 million is in the form of government funding. The Ministry of Tourism sponsors this project, in cooperation with the Jewish agency and the local council of settlements in the Golan.[51]

60. Employment opportunities for the Syrian Arab population in the Golan Heights is extremely restricted, since the movement of the Arab population between the Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic remains problematic, even more so with the current stalled peace process. Hence, the only employment opportunities available to the Syrian population in the Golan is limited to unskilled and semi-skilled daily wage labour. In most conditions, these workers have no access to social benefits, and health insurance and are under constant threat of being made redundant with no compensation. In addition, a substantial differential in wages prevails, to the detriment of the Syrian Arab population of the Golan.[52] Furthermore, improvement of living conditions is further aggravated owing to restrictions on expanding educational facilities, facilitation of education in the Syrian Arab Republic and access to education in Israeli colleges.[53]

61. The Arab population living in the Golan are subjected to prohibitive levels of taxation, including tax on income, health services, local councils, land and housing ownership, value added, ownership of cattle and use of water resources. Such measures have systematically deterred the Arab population from investing in agricultural or small-scale industrial development and have incited many of them to give up farming, or move to other areas and seek wage labour employment.[54]

Notes

[1] Based on the report of the Civil Administration for the West Bank, chart 8.7 (no date).

[2] Based on the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *The Socio-Economic Impact of Israeli Settlements* (to be issued shortly).

[3] Israeli attorney Daniel Seidemann, as quoted in Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., March 1997), p. 8.

[4] Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., March 1998), p. 1.

[5] Nadav Shargay, in *Ha'aretz*, 31 May 1992.

[6] Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., July 1997), p. 1.

[7] Jan de Jong, in "Greater Jerusalem", a special report of the Foundation for Middle East Peace (Washington, D.C., summer 1997), p. 4SR.

[8] E-1 Development Plan and Environment 1998; E-1 analysis, presented in "E-1 settlement expansion plans – preempting the growth of Arab Jerusalem", a special report of the Foundation for Middle East Peace (Washington, D.C., winter 1998).

[9] Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1995, p. 764.

[10] Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1995 and 1992.

[11] Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1995, p. 776.

[12] Miriam Lowi, "West Bank water resources and the resolution of conflict in the Middle East", American Academy of Arts and Sciences, September 1992.

[13] *Al-Wasat*, 21 April 1993.

[14] Peace Now, "The real map – a demographic and demographical analysis of the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip" (Jerusalem, January 1993).

[15] "Israeli obstacles to economic development in the occupied territories", report prepared by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center, November 1992, p. 49.

[16] Aookued Research Institute, "Environmental profile of the West Bank" (Jerusalem, no date).

[17] Shomron Municipal Environmental Association Report (no date), p. 5.

[18] Ibid., p. 6.

[19] Hisham Abdallah, "A tour of the West Bank: from settlement to settlement", *Agence France Presse*, 17 October 1997.

[20] The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, "Water quality in the West Bank" (October 1996), p. 6.

[21] The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, op. cit., p. 9.

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Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

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Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Note by the Secretary-General

In its resolution 1997/67 of 25 July 1995, entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, through the Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/207 of 18 December 1997, reiterated the request for a report. The annexed report, covering the period from June 1997 to May 1998, which was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, is being submitted in response to that request.

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Annex

Report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/207 of 18 December 1997, aware of the additional, detrimental economic and social impact of the Israeli settlements on Palestinian and other Arab natural resources, especially the confiscation of land and the forced diversion of water resources, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and on the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/52/172-E/1997/71 and Corr.1), reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in response to that request and covers developments through May 1998. This report also constitutes a response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/67 of 25 July 1997.

II. Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation

2. The stalling peace process has been accompanied by continuing hardship for the Palestinians in the occupied territory as well as for the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan. Israeli occupation policies and closures of the occupied territories continued to aggravate the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

3. Israeli settlements have been built at some 200 sites seized by civilian and military bodies representing the Government of Israel, as well as by Israeli civilians empowered by Israel to undertake such activity. The land under exclusive Israeli control amounts to about 72 per cent of the West Bank (area C)[1] and 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip. In addition, 30 per cent of the area of East Jerusalem is under effective Israeli ownership. No similar estimates are available for the Golan Heights, where some 15,000 inhabitants of Syrian nationality are living in a few villages close to the Syrian-Lebanese border.[2]

4. Israel has established approximately 150 settlements in the West Bank, with a civilian population of 170,000; in East Jerusalem, approximately 180,000 Israelis are resident; in the Gaza Strip, 5,500 settlers live in 16 settlements; and in the Golan Heights, 15,000 settlers reside in 36 settlements. By the end of 1998, more than 350,000 Israelis will be living in over 200 communities established since 1967 in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.[3]

5. The Jabal Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) project represents a specific example of this policy. Although Israel's decision to establish the new settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim has been opposed in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the present Government has declared that it has no intention of halting or suspending the project. It is intended to become one of the largest settlement projects initiated to date. It is located south of Jerusalem and overlooks the cities of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour. The area of the land set aside for the project amounts to 1,850 dunums (a dunum is equal to approximately 1,000 square metres); the master plan covers an area of 2,056 dunums. In the first stage, this settlement is expected to accommodate 4,000 settlers in 1,000 housing units, gradually increasing to 30,000 settlers occupying some 6,500 units in the final stage.[4]

6. The second half of 1997 was marked by a substantial increase in building construction throughout the occupied territories. New construction has been observed at 93 of the 130 settlements in the West Bank, in settlements close to Jerusalem, as well as isolated posts in the West Bank heartland. Because of their distance from existing facilities, at least 13 of these construction sites could be characterized as new settlements, although they are considered by Israel to be part of existing settlements. Press reports in Israel place the number of new units under construction at 5,000 during 1997. Other sources have confirmed the approval and initial construction of 4,000 units in West Bank settlements, enough to increase the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by more than 10 per cent. There are currently more than 160,000 Israelis living in 45,000 units in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[5]

7. The situation of Israeli settlements expansion in the occupied territories, at the end of 1997, could be summarized as follows:

A. Settler population

West Bank: 165,000
Gaza Strip: 5,500
Golan Heights: 15,000
East Jerusalem: 180,000

B. Settlement expansion

New settlement areas established: 13
New dwellings begun in settlements: 4,500-5,000

C. Number of new dwellings formally approved (August 1996-March 1998): 2,268

D. Number of units sold in West Bank settlements: 1,560

E. Number of units completed in West Bank settlements: 4,000

F. Total lands confiscated in 1997: 25,000 dunums

Bypass roads: 4,951 dunums
New settlements: 723 dunums
Settlement expansion: 14,784
Industrial settlements: 4,480

G. Palestinian homes demolished by the Israel Defence Forces, area C: 233 in 1997

290 from January 1997 to March 1998

Sources: Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., March 1998), pp. 1-2; Khalil Tufakji, Orient House; Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, E-mail communication, 24 April 1998.

8. The plans of the Ministry of Housing and Construction for 1998 include tendering land for the first 1,000 units to be built in the settlement of Har Homa, as well as 820 units in the "greater Jerusalem" settlement of Givat Ze'ev. These allocations are part of a 1998 programme to tender more than 27 per cent of the national total of 23,000 units in land occupied in 1967, a goal which, if implemented, will indicate a significant campaign of intended settlement expansion.[5]

9. Settlement expansion in the West Bank appears to be occurring not only in those areas within easy commuting distance of Jerusalem and the Tel Aviv metropolis, but also in the rural, isolated outposts throughout the West Bank. The increasing dependence on market forces in the housing market appears not to have stopped the expansion of settlements in these latter areas.

10. Since 1967, only 12 per cent of all new construction in Jerusalem has taken place in East Jerusalem. During the period 1977-1983, for example, 90 per cent of construction was for Israelis. The figure translates into an annual pace of apartment construction of 2,170 for Israelis and only 230 for Palestinians. Housing construction for Israelis in East Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, has been critical to the overall growth of the city. The 180,000 Israelis who today live in this area comprise 76 per cent of the total increase in Jerusalem's Jewish population since 1967.[6]

11. Government restrictions on Palestinian housing construction, and the complementary boom in Israeli construction that has amounted to more than 40,000 apartment units built in East Jerusalem settlement communities, have ensured that Palestinians today comprise no greater a share of the city's population than they did in 1967. An additional 46,300 housing units are planned for the entire city. Out of these, about 10,000 will be built on 14,000 dunums (3,500 acres) of Israeli territory included in West Jerusalem in May 1996. An additional 17,710 units will be located in East Jerusalem settlement communities.[7]

12. During the next 15 years, the outer ring of settlements of greater Jerusalem might accommodate more than 200,000 new settlers, in addition to the 50,000 currently residing there, according to some estimates. During this period, completion of the Israeli suburban sections within Jerusalem itself (Har Homa and other locations) is expected to increase the number of East Jerusalem's 180,000 Israeli citizens to at least 250,000. In that sense, settlement expansion in East Jerusalem continues to play a crucial role in offsetting Palestinian population growth. This increase in Israel's settler population would bring the total number of Israeli settlers in and around East Jerusalem by the year 2015 to 500,000. The Palestinian population is expected to double over the same period, to 1.5 million within greater Jerusalem and to 1 million in the metropolitan region.[8]

13. The scheme[9] for development of this area has significance beyond the territory that it encompasses, demonstrating the degree to which settlement expansion has been integrated into Israel's national planning schemes. E-1 controls the main axis of socio-economic development for Israel itself, as outlined in the metropolitan master plan, completed in 1994-1995. This critical area runs along the trajectory of road 45, which originates in greater Tel Aviv and leads via Ben Gurion Airport – with expansion planned in conjunction with large industrial zones around the new city of Modi'in to greater Jerusalem at the West Bank settlement of Givat Ze'ev. The road continues along the recently developed archeological site next to the Prophet Samuel's tomb – to be surrounded at a distance by gentrified

housing estates – and passes the East Jerusalem settlement community of Ramot and the expanding high-technology industrial park of Har Hotzvim to arrive at the projected "Eastern Gate" settlement site in East Jerusalem. From there it passes to Ma'ale Adumim, with its industrial zone, also scheduled to expand greatly, and another large residential area projected at Tibek Kuteif, on the heights above the Jordan Valley.

14. In 1967, 2,300 square kilometres of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were under Palestinian cultivation. In 1989, the figure had been reduced to 1,945 square kilometres, or 31.5 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Agriculture comprised 24 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1966, the same percentage as in the period 1980-1985. By 1994, the percentage had decreased to less than 15 per cent.[10] In 1966, the agricultural sector provided employment for 55,000, or 43 per cent of total employment, whereas in the period 1980-1985, there were 40,000 employed in the agricultural sector, comprising 24 per cent of those Palestinians employed.[11] In 1993, the percentage of employed persons working in agriculture was 22 per cent.[12]

15. These gross indicators, however, cannot lead to any specific conclusions regarding the real effect of settlements on agricultural employment or production, or land under cultivation. Settlements are only one of a number of variables that must be considered when assessing these trends.

16. In this context, there are regions such as the Jordan Valley where a direct link may be established between the loss of Palestinians' agricultural opportunities and Israeli settlements. Contamination by sewage also directly affects Palestinian agriculture, albeit on a smaller scale, in the region around Kiryat Arba near Hebron. The confiscation of agricultural lands and their transfer to settlements, which has occurred on numerous occasions, may well result in loss of agricultural income and employment, though this has never been quantified beyond anecdotal reporting. There are also costs associated with Israeli-owned industries in the occupied territories, such as a recycling plant for used motor oil, stone quarries and other plants where harmful and toxic by-products are produced.

17. Limited access to water remains the greatest obstacle to Palestinian agricultural development. According to a recent report by Miriam Lowi for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, almost the entire increase in Israeli water use since 1967 derives from the waters of the West Bank and the upper Jordan River.[13] However, Israel is today in the midst of a water emergency. Even with the resources acquired in 1967, it is pumping more water from aquifers than nature can replace. In the West Bank, Israel is exploiting water amounting to 15 per cent of total consumption for its own population in Israel and the occupied territories. It is also preventing the Palestinian community from increasing its water use to barely 20 per cent beyond the amount used in 1967, and only for personal use, not for agriculture and economic development. "The status quo", wrote Leopold Laufer in a recent report for an Israeli think tank, "has effectively barred economic development in the territories and in Gaza".[14]

18. In both the bilateral and multilateral negotiations which began in Madrid, Israel has sought to protect its continuing control over this resource in the West Bank, which was described by Israel's State Comptroller in February 1993 as the principal reservoir of drinking water for the Dan region, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Beersheba, and the most important long-term source in the national water system.[14]

19. In 1987, when settlers were barely 10 per cent of the Palestinian population in the West Bank, Palestinian consumption totalled 115 cm^3 while settler consumption equalled 97 cm^3.[15] A report by Peace Now noted that the Jewish settlers' per capita irrigated areas are 7 and 13 times larger than the areas accorded to the Palestinians for irrigation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, respectively.[15]

20. A report prepared by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center in November 1992 notes that lack of water has forced Palestinian farmers to remove tracts from cultivation and that the digging of new deep wells for settlements, particularly in the Jordan Valley, has caused subsequent shortages for Palestinian farmers.[16]

21. There are approximately 260 Israeli-owned industrial enterprises in the West Bank. Environmental regulations on soil, air and water quality, and restrictions on industrial development, have generally been far less comprehensive and much less enforced in the occupied territories compared to Israel proper.[17] Combined with state-subsidized incentives for Israeli concerns to locate to industrial parks in and nearby settlements, the relative laxity of environmental enforcement and monitoring has led to the relocation of polluting industries into the occupied territories.

22. The factories posing an environmental risk generally utilize wet processes in the industrial sectors of packaged food, manufacturing, metal coating and textiles.[18]

23. The Shomron Municipal Environmental Association, a governmental body established by settlements in the northern part of the West Bank to monitor and improve environmental quality, acknowledges that "waste-water

effluents from these plants and from nearly 100 residential communities in our region, if not properly treated, pose a threat to the groundwater quality in the region. In addition, industrial air emissions and noise generation can be problematic at some factories".[19]

24. There are 45 enterprises operating in the industrial park of Burkan adjacent to the settlement of Ariel. Most are engaged in the production of fabric and plastics for export. The owners of these factories escape the tighter rules on health and the environment inside Israel itself to work in the West Bank where they get tax breaks.[20] In addition to Burkan, Palestinians have complained about the operation of industrial facilities at Ariel, Karne Shomron, Kiryat Arba, and Adumim.[21] Of particular concern is the effect of industrial development on the quality of groundwater, which Palestinian investigators have found to be "significantly more polluted" near settlements than elsewhere.[21]

25. The settlement of Kiryat Arba has been identified by Palestinian investigators as "the main source of pollution in the Hebron area".[22] A tile factory located in the settlement's industrial area was flushing its wastewater through the sewage system, resulting in numerous problems. The city of Hebron successfully petitioned the court to stop this practice. The wastewater is now trucked off in tanks and dumped on Palestinian fields.[22] The water contains high levels of calcium carbonate, increasing the already high pH level of the land.

26. Geshurei Industries, a manufacturer of pesticides and fertilizers, was originally located in the Israeli town of Kfar Saba. Public concern about the environmental effects of the factory – on land, public health and agriculture – resulted in an Israeli court order in 1982 closing the plant. Since 1987, the factory has been operating across the Green Line, in Tulkarm, where there are effectively no controls on waste disposal or air pollution. Other Israeli industrial polluters, including those working in the fields of asbestos, fibreglass, pesticides and flammable gases, also relocated to the Tulkarm area. According to a report by the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, the factory pollution directly affects 144 dunums of prime agricultural land and causes substantial damage to the public health.[23] The Israeli court has ordered some remedial action, including compensation to affected farmers, but the plant remains in operation.

27. The same report notes severe negative effects of the factory operation on the nearby community, including decay of a majority of trees and other vegetation around the plant, chemical dust and residue and a liquid substance causing a decrease in productivity in field and hot house agriculture, and factory by-products, including sodium and salt, prominent in soil samples of land found to be non-arable. These effects are a consequence of factory by-products and waste-water contamination of agricultural land.

28. The report further points to clear evidence of polluting groundwater through leakage of chemicals, and proof of the improper disposal of wastes and by-products.[23]

29. The report also documented a very high ratio of health-related problems among farmers and people living around the factory, including severe headaches, itchy eyes, spastic and chronic coughs and bronchial asthma.[23] The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture notes that the public health of the community has not been well documented owing to decades of military occupation and direct conflict, suggesting that environmentally related health problems may be more pervasive than currently estimated. The long-term impact on soil and groundwater has similarly received inadequate attention.[24]

30. As a consequence of the harmful effects of Israeli-operated industry around Tulkarm, the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture estimated that 17 per cent of Tulkarm's agricultural land has been affected by pollution originating at the six Israeli concerns that have located in the Tulkarm area. Three of the factories are sited on what Palestinians claim to be Waqf land. Other sites are claimed by private Palestinian owners. Several factories are located less than 100 metres from residential housing.[24]

31. There are hundreds of sites for the disposal of trash in the occupied territories, including dozens that are unauthorized. There are 246 sites in the West Bank north of Jerusalem alone. Most of the sites are simple, primitive sites with few if any environmental safeguards. And none is used exclusively by settlements or Palestinian communities. The Shomron Municipal Environmental Association acknowledges that the sites are improperly maintained, generating odours and smoke which are a nuisance to neighbouring residents, as well as posing a threat to groundwater quality.[25]

32. The site in Jiyous near Kalkilya is typical. Located on 12 dunums, 200 metres from the wadi that serves as a source of drinking water for the village of Azoun, the site opened in 1990. It is used principally by the settlements of Karnei Shomron, Keddu and Ma'al Shomron. The Shomron Municipal Environment Association is now being pressured by trash contractors in Israel to permit them to use the dump for trash generated in Israel, after the Israeli dump they had been using was closed by the Israeli Government.[26]

33. Israel conducted a geographical information system study in 1996 as part of an effort to develop a master plan to establish an order of priorities to improve and consolidate the system of trash disposal in the West Bank. The master plan for trash disposal in the West Bank is being conducted exclusively by Israel, without official or informal Palestinian participation.

34. There are literally thousands of stone quarries on the West Bank, supplying 80 per cent of the material needs of Israel's construction sector. Many of these stones are used in settlement construction.[26] The clouds of white dust produced by the quarries pose certain health risks. Recent reports note that those residing near such enterprises suffer from increased levels of asthma and acute bronchial infections.[27]

35. The mitigation of environmental problems in the occupied territories, including those caused by the existence and expansion of settlements, are viewed by Israelis as a forum for joint Israeli-Palestinian action. Yet, Israeli environmental planners in the territories continue to view Palestinians as junior partners, at best. Palestinians, for their part, are willing to cooperate with Israeli communities within Israel's pre-1967 borders, but they refuse, as a matter of principle, to participate in joint efforts with settlers.[26]

36. Palestinians have traditionally made up the bulk of the workforce engaged in the construction and daily maintenance of settlements throughout the occupied territories. Some 12,000 Palestinian labourers work in Israeli settlements; 3,500 work in the Erez industrial zone and settlements in the Gaza Strip, and 8,500 in industrial parks and settlements in the West Bank[27] not including those working in the settlement communities of East Jerusalem.

37. The unemployment situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip remains critical, in particular owing to closures and increased reliance of Israel on expatriate workers from outside the region. The number of Palestinian workers in Israel dropped from an average of 120,000 on a monthly basis in 1992 to an average of about 25,000 in 1996.[28]

38. The overall economic environment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip inhibits investment and growth owing to the continued ambiguity of the legal and political situation. According to the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, "the complex overlay of laws and Israeli military orders in force during the occupation remains in place. This is further aggravated by border closures which include banning movement of goods, factors of production and people between the Palestinian areas and Israel and the Gaza Strip, and between the rest of the West Bank and Jerusalem. Closure also often entails banning movement between the West Bank, Jordan and the Gaza Strip".[29]

39. In the period 1993-1996, there were a total of 342 days of closure affecting the Gaza Strip and 291 days in the West Bank. In 1996 alone, closures increased over the year before by 57 per cent in the West Bank and 35 per cent in the Gaza Strip. The 1996 closures differed from those in preceding years in that they were in effect for much longer periods, which has a significant effect on the continuity and regularity of production, marketing, income generation and employment.[30]

40. Frequent Israeli closures have been a major factor behind the 18 per cent drop in gross national product (GNP) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the 35 per cent drop in per capita GNP between 1992 and 1996. In addition, in 1997 gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated to have grown by 1.2 per cent, down from 5.5 per cent in 1996, as estimated by the Palestinian Authority and the International Monetary Fund, while the population growth was estimated at 4.5 per cent, thus explaining the further deterioration in GDP per capita in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[31]

41. However, economic indicators show that the actual deterioration in standards of living has been far more dramatic in the West Bank, with a 19.7 per cent loss of per capita GDP compared with 8.4 per cent in the Gaza Strip in the period 1993-1995. This drop does not reflect the further deterioration, which occurred with the lengthy closures and widespread confrontations in later years.[32]

42. Frequent closures have also negatively affected trade, particularly exports from the territories, causing long delays at the border which are detrimental to export goods, particularly vegetables and fruits. In addition, the delay in arrival of raw materials from Israel to the West Bank and Gaza Strip leads to the upsetting of production plans and to a lowering of capacity utilization.[33]

43. Bank lending and deposits in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been modest. In 1997, lending remained at about 19 per cent of the total assets, reflecting a depressed demand for credit by investors. The relatively low deposit/GDP ratio was, at the end of 1996, about 57.5 per cent. A further substantial increase in total bank deposits is not, however, expected to take place before a successful conclusion of final status negotiations. Owing to political uncertainties, many residents maintain bank accounts abroad.[34]

44. Tourism, which was one of the first economic sectors to benefit from the peace dividend as it boomed during the period 1994-1995, has been affected by the stalemate in the peace process. According to the Palestinian Economic Policy

Research Institute, "the Israeli authorities refuse to issue permits for new hotels or for expanding existing ones in East Jerusalem. This resulted in the freezing of the number of rooms at Arab-owned hotels in East Jerusalem at their 1967 level while the number of rooms at hotels operating in the rest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip declined. As a result of Israeli licensing policies, the number of Palestinian guides in East Jerusalem dropped from 154 in 1967 to 47 in 1995, and their number in the rest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was down to 24 in 1995, six of whom were newly licensed by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism. Furthermore, the fact that the Israeli authorities neglected the infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has made it difficult for the tourism sector to attract new investments".[35] Visitors to the West Bank and Gaza Strip still come through Israeli airports. Palestinian travel agents are prevented from meeting arriving clients and there are no tourist bus companies based in the West Bank outside East Jerusalem.[36]

45. While incentives and investment continued to promote the Israeli civilian presence in the Syrian Golan, the Arab population faces further deterioration in their living conditions owing to Israeli settlements, restrictions on employment opportunities and education, as well as the Israeli taxation policy.[37]

46. In the Golan Heights, there are currently 15,000 Israelis living in 33 settlement communities established in the wake of Israel's 1967 capture of the Golan Heights. The Syrian population, numbering an equal amount, resides in five villages in the Golan's north-eastern corner.[38]

47. Some 2,000 dwellings are in various stages of construction in the Golan settlements. The completion of some was frozen by previous governments. Others were rented to army officers stationed in the area. A few completed units remained empty in previous years because of the lack of demand in view of the uncertainty created by negotiations between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic over the Golan's future.[39]

48. In the months before Prime Minister Netanyahu's election, this picture was already changing. After the collapse of the negotiations with the Syrian Arab Republic in February 1996, then Prime Minister Shimon Peres ordered the sale of many of these apartments, and made building plots available for private construction. The last of the 700 units built during the past three years at Katzrin, the largest settlement, had already been sold. Katzrin's population grew by 50 per cent during this period, from 4,000 to 6,000. A full 20 per cent of the area's residents arrived during 1996.[40] Planning and site work for 1,000 additional units is currently under way. Some 115 new units for the Elad settlement were approved in April 1996.[41] And in May 1996, the Golan Regional Council began a drive to sell 250 units scattered throughout the area's 32 settlements.

49. Among the most prominent projects now under way are a $130 million tourism and hotel project at Hamat Gader, a deal between MacDonald's and the kibbutz settlement of Merom Golan to grow potatoes for the company's french fries on 300 dunums, and at the settlement of Ortal, a $4.5 million dairy, the largest in the Middle East.[42]

50. At meetings with Golan settlers soon after his election, Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated his commitment to increase Katzrin's population to 15,000 during his tenure. He also announced his approval of the "Golan 2000" plan presented to him before the election. The plan calls for a $202 million public sector investment in infrastructure, and new housing construction in 10 settlements, to reach the goal of increasing the plateau's Israeli population by 10,000 during the next four years.[43]

51. On 20 January 1997, construction began on 600 new units at the settlements of Hmat Ghadar, Ramot and Gamla.[44] "In fact", noted *Ma'ariv* on 30 December 1996, "we are speaking of an 'expansion plan' according to which new settlements will be established in the Golan, under the rubric of 'expanding' existing settlements".[45] Three new settlements will be established as part of the first stage of the expansion. Despite such efforts to increase the Golan settler population, by May 1996, settlement leaders were complaining that there was an "enormous gap" between settlement plans and their actual implementation.[46]

52. At the outset of a campaign to expand residential construction and to increase the settler population – part of the "Golan 2000" programme – settlement leaders reported that the settler population in the Golan is to increase by 10,000 to more than 25,000 by the year 2000.[47]

53. Settlement leader Yehuda Wolman reported that 1,600 units had been constructed in the period 1989-1996, at a rate averaging 225 units annually. He also noted that of the 14,000 Israelis residing in the Golan, 3,000 are employed by the local government council, and one third are engaged in agriculture. In 1996, agricultural production reached $240 million, while industrial production reached $100 million, tourism $40 million, sales and services $50 million, and public services $20 million. Investment in industrial production amounted to $16 million in the period 1992-1996.[48] Settlement expansion is concentrated at the settlement of Katzrin, with a current population of 7,000, the largest among 32 Golan settlements. Three hundred new units were begun in mid-1997 and formal approval from the Minister of Defence was awaited to begin construction of

an additional 1,000 units. To enable construction of the 1,000 units, the municipal area of Katzrin was expanded by 1,200 dunums bordering a nature reserve.[49]

54. For the first time since the beginning of Israeli settlement in the Golan, a private sector contractor, as opposed to government companies, undertook a residential construction project. The 300 cottages being built at Katzrin sell for $95,000 to $110,000. The State provides subsidized grants, benefits and loans comprising 90 per cent of this amount.[49] For example, beginning in October 1997, 35 building plots were marketed in the settlement of Katzrin as part of the popular "build your own house" programme. The one-half dunum plots were offered at no cost. Buyers were required to pay $10,000 towards development costs, one half the actual investment by the State. By mid-December, more than 100 prospective buyers had signed up for the 35 available lots.[50]

55. A number of incentives were adopted to attract prospective Israeli settlers into the Golan Heights, including individual grants of 50,000 shekels (equivalent to US$ 16,500) and mortgage facilities as high as 95 per cent of the value of the house, with generous repayment terms.[51] In addition, substantial state subsidies are provided in various economic sectors to strengthen the Israeli settlements policy. This includes an ongoing plan for the development of tourism in the Golan Heights, which is estimated at about US$ 5.5 million. Of that sum, $4 million is in the form of government funding. The Ministry of Tourism sponsors this project, in cooperation with the Jewish agency and the local council of settlements in the Golan.[52]

56. Employment opportunities for the Syrian Arab population in the Golan Heights are extremely restricted, since the movement of the Arab population between the Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic remains problematic with the current stalled peace process. Hence, the only employment opportunities available to the Syrian population in the Golan are limited to unskilled and semi-skilled daily wage labour. In most conditions, these workers have no access to social benefits, and health insurance and are under constant threat of being made redundant with no compensation. In addition, a substantial differential in wages prevails, to the detriment of the Syrian Arab population of the Golan.[53] Furthermore, improvement of living conditions is further aggravated owing to restrictions on expanding educational facilities, facilitation of education in the Syrian Arab Republic and access to education in Israeli colleges.[54]

57. The Arab population living in the Golan are subjected to prohibitive levels of taxation, including tax on income, health services, local councils, land and housing ownership, value added, ownership of cattle and use of water resources. Such measures have systematically deterred the Arab population from investing in agricultural or small-scale industrial development and have incited many of them to give up farming, or move to other areas and seek wage labour employment.[55]

Notes

[1] On 28 September 1995, in Washington, D.C., Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This accord detailed the mechanisms for, and the limitation of, the extension of Palestinian self-rule to significant portions of the West Bank. The main feature of the Agreement was the provision for the division of the West Bank into three areas, each with varying degrees of Israeli and Palestinian responsibility. Area A consisted of the seven major Palestinian towns, Jenin, Kalkiliya, Tulkarm, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron, in which Palestinians would have complete authority for civilian security. In area B, which comprised all other Palestinian population centres (except for some refugee camps), Israel would retain "overriding security responsibility". In area C, which includes all settlements, military bases and areas, and State lands, Israel would retain sole security authority.

[2] Based on the report of the Civil Administration for the West Bank, chart 8.7 (no date).

[3] Based on the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *The Socio-Economic Impact of Israeli Settlements* (to be issued shortly).

[4] Israeli attorney Daniel Seidemann, as quoted in Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., March 1997), p. 8.

[5] Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., March 1998), p. 1.

[6] Nadav Shargay, in *Ha'aretz*, 31 May 1992.

[7] Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., July 1997), p. 1.

[8] Jan de Jong, in "Greater Jerusalem", a special report of the Foundation for Middle East Peace (Washington, D.C., summer 1997), p. 4SR.

[9] E-1 Development Plan and Environment 1998; E-1 analysis, presented in "E-1 settlement expansion plans – preempting the growth of Arab Jerusalem", a special report of the Foundation for Middle East Peace (Washington, D.C., winter 1998).

[10] Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1995, p. 764.

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[12] Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1995, p. 776.

[13] Miriam Lowi, "West Bank water resources and the resolution of conflict in the Middle East", American Academy of Arts and Sciences, September 1992.

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[15] Peace Now, "The real map – a demographic and demographical analysis of the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip" (Jerusalem, January 1993).

[16] "Israeli obstacles to economic development in the occupied territories", report prepared by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center, November 1992, p. 49.

[17] Aookued Research Institute, "Environmental profile of the West Bank" (Jerusalem, no date).

[18] Shomron Municipal Environmental Association Report (no date), p. 5.

[19] Ibid., p. 6.

[20] Hisham Abdallah, "A tour of the West Bank: from settlement to settlement", *Agence France Presse*, 17 October 1997.

[21] The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, "Water quality in the West Bank" (October 1996), p. 6.

[22] The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, op. cit., p. 9.

[23] The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, "The slow death of man and the environment" (March 1992).

[24] Palestinian Authority, "Environmental pollution as a tool for post-Oslo Israeli control: the case of Tulkarm", report prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture (undated).

[25] Palestinian Authority, op. cit., and Shomron, op. cit., p. 7.

[26] *Ha'aretz*, 14 November 1997.

[27] Israeli Foreign Ministry, Information Division, "Economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority", background paper (Jerusalem, February 1998).

[28] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region, 1997-1998* (to be issued shortly).

[29] Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), *MAS Economic Monitor*, No. 1, 1997, pp. 2-3.

[30] Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

[31] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Survey of Economic and Social Developments* ..., p. 25.

[32] Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, op. cit., pp. 11-13.

[33] Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

[34] Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, op. cit., pp. 31-36.

[35] Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, op. cit., p. 19.

[36] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, "Impact of the peace process on trade in services: the tourism sector in the ESCWA region, case studies on Egypt, Jordan and Palestine" (E/ESCWA/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ 1997/8), p. 56.

[37] Syrian Arab Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Report on Israeli practices against human rights of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan" (June 1997), pp. 12-20.

[38] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *The Socio-Economic Impact of Israeli Settlements* ...

[39] *Yediot Aharanot*, 13 August 1996.

[40] *Ha'aretz*, 17 June 1996.

[41] *Ha'aretz*, 28 April 1996.

[42] *Ha'aretz*, 8 July 1996.

[43] *Ha'aretz*, 9 July 1996.

[44] Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories* (Washington, D.C., March-April 1997), p. 4.

[45] *Ma'ariv*, 30 December 1996.

[46] *Ma'ariv*, 5 May 1997.

[47] *Yediot Aharanot*, 20 June 1997.

[48] *Ha'aretz*, 20 June 1997.

[49] *Yediot Aharanot*, 6 May 1997.

[50] *Ma'ariv*, 30 December 1997.

[51] *Yediot Aharanot*, 21 March 1996, as quoted in "Report on Israeli practices against human rights of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan" ..., p. 9.

[52] *El-Quds Press*, January 1997, as quoted in "Report on Israeli practices against human rights of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan" ..., p. 10.

[53] "Report on Israeli practices against human rights of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan" ..., pp. 16-17.

[54] Ibid., pp. 20-24.

[55] Ibid., pp. 14 and 15.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Item 54 of the preliminary list*
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION
OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of the final communiqué adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its sixty-seventh session, held at the seat of its secretariat in Riyadh on 28 June 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 54 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad A. ABULHASAN
Permanent Representative

* A/53/50.

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Annex

Final communiqué adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its sixty-seventh session, held in Riyadh on 28 June 1998

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its sixty-seventh session on 28 June 1998 at the seat of its secretariat, His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait and Chairman-in-Office of the Council, presiding. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman; and

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Bin Ibrahim al-Hegelan, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council reviewed measures previously taken and follow-up action to the recommendations and decisions adopted by its ministerial and technical committees since the sixty-sixth session in the political, military and economic fields and on social affairs, questions relating to information and security-related developments.

Progress made in cooperation

The Council was informed of the measures, recommendations and decisions adopted for the promotion of joint economic action by the GCC States by a number of its ministerial and technical committees. It reviewed the decisions taken by the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation at its forty-seventh meeting on the classification of goods and the standardization of the customs tariff for member States vis-à-vis the rest of the world as a preliminary step towards the establishment of a customs union. The Council expressed satisfaction at the progress made in that regard. It also reviewed the action taken by the Committee on measures for the implementation of the decisions of the Supreme Council on promoting a greater degree of economic self-sufficiency, and it endorsed the agreements reached with regard to value added, national ownership and measures for the refurbishing of factories in the Gulf States. The Ministerial Council recommended that the paper entitled "The general framework

of the GCC population strategy", on which agreement had been reached by the Planning and Development Committee at its sixth (special) meeting, should be submitted to the Supreme Council for its endorsement. The Council took note of the results of the ninth (special) meeting of the Committee on Agricultural and Hydrological Cooperation as they concerned the projects for comprehensive surveys of the shrimp fisheries and of benthic fish stocks, and it also noted the recommendations relating to the rationalization of water use.

The Council received a report on negotiations and discussions with States and international economic groupings. It heard briefings on the visit of the general coordinator of negotiations to the European Commission and on the visit of a European Commission delegation to the GCC secretariat for discussions on a free-trade agreement with the European Union. It gave instructions for the preparation of a draft Gulf proposal for submission to the European side and directed that the negotiations on the free-trade agreement should proceed.

In the context of social affairs, the Council considered communications from a number of its ministerial and technical committees dealing with education, human resources, health, culture and youth on the promotion of joint action in these fields. It endorsed the recommendations made in their regard.

The Council reviewed a secretariat memorandum concerning progress made in military and security-related cooperation among member States, and it expressed satisfaction at the steps taken in this field since its last session. It decided to submit the relevant recommendations to the Supreme Council. It further reviewed a secretariat report on cooperation in the field of information, and it decided to promote joint action in that context.

Political affairs

Implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait

The Council discussed developments in connection with the implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait, and it affirmed its support for the efforts of the Special Commission for the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. It called upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the Special Commission and to enable the Special Commission to perform its tasks in accordance with the modalities set forth in the Security Council resolutions relating to its work.

The Council reaffirmed that Iraq must implement all the other relevant Security Council resolutions without exception and without imposing conditions, particularly those relating to the release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and detainees, that it must comply with resolution 949 (1994) by refraining from any hostile or provocative action against neighbouring States and that it must return the Kuwaiti property seized. Only thus could the sanctions imposed on Iraq be mitigated and the suffering of the Iraqi people relieved.

The Council noted with great concern and indignation the statements made by the Vice-President of the Republic of Iraq casting doubt on Security Council

resolution 833 (1993) concerning the demarcation of the boundaries between Kuwait and Iraq. It affirmed its rejection of those statements in view of the great danger they posed for the security and stability of the region and the threat they represented to the security and sovereignty of Kuwait. The Council called upon the international community to adopt concrete deterrent measures in order to counter Iraq's constant defiance of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Council reiterated the view expressed in its previous communiqués that Iraq must acknowledge that the invasion and occupation of Kuwait were in violation of the inter-Arab and international covenants, the international rule of law, the Pact of the League of Arab States, the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty between the States of the Arab League and the Charter of the United Nations. It also renewed its call to Iraq to take the necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards Kuwait and the States of the region by word and deed so as to ensure the security and stability of all the States of the region.

The Council expressed the hope that the plan for the distribution of basic humanitarian needs to the Iraqi people would be given effect as soon as possible in implementation of Security Council resolution 1153 (1998), which had the aim of mitigating the suffering of the Iraqi people.

In this context, the Council stressed the firmly established and well known positions it had taken with respect to the preservation of the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and relations with Iran

(a) The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates

The Council reviewed developments with regard to the issue of Iran's occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates, in the light of the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Abu Dhabi on 23 May 1998. It expressed its optimism at the results achieved by that visit and its hope that continued contacts between the two countries would be conducive to a positive response by the Iranian Government to the sincere appeals made to it to pursue peaceful means to resolve the ongoing dispute concerning the islands in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including agreement to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice. At the same time, the Council stressed its established position affirming the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands and its unconditional support for all the peaceful measures it is taking to re-establish that sovereignty. It again urges the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the islands, to rescind all unilateral measures taken in the past and remove all of the installations built, and to resolve the dispute by peaceful means in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including agreement to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice.

(b) Relations with Iran

The Council considered developments in connection with its relations with Iran in the light of the positions taken by its member States on the basis of their conviction that it is important to maintain good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the non-use or threat of use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Council noted that there were encouraging indications, as exemplified by increased contacts and bilateral meetings between GCC member States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and it expressed its optimism that such meetings and official visits would have positive results that would strengthen mutual trust, establish good faith and lead to the peaceful resolution of outstanding differences, and primarily the issue of the occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, with a view to ensuring security and stability in the region.

The peace process in the Middle East

In accordance with the firmly established positions taken by the GCC member States with regard to the peace process in the Middle East, the Council reviewed ongoing developments in this regard. It expressed deep concern that Israel was maintaining its position of intransigence and of refusing to implement the agreements concluded with the Palestinian National Authority or to comply with the undertakings given to Arab and international parties. It considered that Israel's attitude had thwarted international and Arab efforts to salvage the peace process from the critical situation in which it found itself.

The Council expressed its unconditional rejection and condemnation of the Israeli Government's decision to expand the geographical boundaries of Jerusalem and alter its demographic composition in violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. It also condemned Israel's policy of expanding its settlements in the occupied Palestinian Arab territory and its decision to establish an armed militia consisting of Israeli settlers. The Council considers that such actions are in flagrant violation of the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference, of all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council and, in particular, of resolution 252 (1968), in which the Security Council considers that Israel's actions with regard to Jerusalem are invalid.

The Ministerial Council commended the international consensus on the need for the peace process to proceed on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference. It affirmed that Israel must be required to implement the agreements concluded with the Palestinian National Authority and to resume negotiations with Syria from the point at which they were suspended and that there must be full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the boundary line of 4 June 1967 as well as from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

In this connection, the Council renewed its call to the co-sponsors of the peace process, and in particular to the United States of America, to redouble the efforts being made to salvage the peace process and to avert failure. It further called upon the United States Administration to take urgent action to overcome the obstacles to the peace process and to announce officially its plan for redeployment in the West Bank. On that basis, the Council expressed its conviction that there must be thorough preparation for any Arab summit meeting if it was to succeed in helping to salvage the peace process.

The Council renewed its call to the European Union and its member States to step up their efforts to ensure a just and comprehensive peace in the region, and it commended in this connection the position taken by the European Union with regard to the peace process in the Middle East and its continued support to the Palestinian National Authority.

Elimination of weapons of mass destruction

The Council reiterated its call to the international community for action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council affirmed once again that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

In this context, the Council considered the recent developments in the situation between India and Pakistan as represented by the nuclear tests recently carried out by both countries. While it expresses great sadness and concern at this arms race between the two countries and at its dangerous consequences for the security and stability of the region, the Council calls upon the two countries to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to resume their dialogue on all outstanding questions so as to promote peace and stability in the region. In this connection, the Council commended the Pakistani Government for its wise decision to halt its nuclear tests unilaterally and it expressed the wish that the Indian Government would emulate its neighbour with a view to achieving security and stability in South Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

The armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia

The Council expressed great sadness at the armed conflict under way between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which had left many dead and wounded on both sides. It urged the two countries to halt the military confrontation between them, to engage in dialogue in order to settle their boundary disputes by peaceful means, to respond positively to the calls being made for mediation in order to contain their differences within the framework of the historical relations between the two neighbours, and to utilize their capacities in order to promote their development and ensure security and stability in the region.

The situation in Kosovo

The Council expressed its condemnation of the aggressive practices and of the policy of expulsion, starvation and ethnic cleansing being pursued by Serbian forces against the Muslim inhabitants of the Kosovo region. It calls upon the international community to do everything in its power to halt the inhuman actions being taken against this people so that the inhabitants of the Kosovo region may enjoy security and stability and the right to a life of freedom and dignity.

Extremism, violence and terrorism

The Council affirms once more that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not restricted to any particular people or region, and it reaffirms its commitment to its unconditional repudiation and rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism from whatever source they may come. The Council further expresses its regret that certain States are continuing to shelter extremist terrorist elements on grounds of protecting human rights. The Council reiterates its call to those States to distinguish between such rights and terrorist practices that threaten the security, integrity and stability of States and place their citizens and residents in the greatest jeopardy. It also urges these States, once again, to prevent such elements and extremist and terrorist groups from using their territory and exploiting their laws in order to obtain funding and weapons and from engaging in any other activities that threaten the security and integrity of States.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Items 82 and 97 of the preliminary list*
EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 27 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 25 June 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, containing a review of the disastrous effects on the environment and people in Iraq resulting from the use by United Kingdom and United States forces of depleted uranium shells during their aggression against Iraq in 1991.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council, and of the General Assembly under agenda items 84 (Effects of atomic radiation) and 98 (Environment and sustainable development).

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/53/50.

Annex

Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Foreign Minister of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to draw your attention to the letter dated 16 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. John Weston, concerning the use of depleted uranium (DU) by United Kingdom forces during their aggression against Iraq in 1991 (S/1998/517).

Mr. Weston's assertion that United Kingdom tanks fired fewer than 100 DU rounds against Iraqi military forces constitutes yet another official acknowledgement that the United Kingdom Government, which joined with the Coalition States, under the leadership of the United States of America, in launching a war against Iraq, used weaponry that is internationally prohibited under the 1980 United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, because of the suffering and tragedy which such weaponry and ammunition inflict on the civilian population and on combatants alike. The use of such weaponry has no justification other than to demonstrate ill will and a desire for devastation and indiscriminate killing to the point of genocide, which is outlawed by the international community and is an act for which its perpetrators are punished. It also constitutes a flagrant and serious violation of human rights.

The claim made in Mr. Weston's letter that the United Kingdom armoured forces operated at a considerable distance from the centres of population in southern Iraq is simply a desperate attempt which conveys the contempt and scorn shown for international customary laws, charters, agreements and instruments. We should like to refer here to a report, published in the 10 April 1995 edition of Le Monde Diplomatique, which was written by Mr. William M. Arkin, President of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington. In the report, Mr. Arkin states that 940,000 30-mm shells, each containing 300 grams of DU, were fired from A-10 aircraft, and that 4,000 120-mm shells, each containing one kilogram of DU, were fired from tanks. It can therefore be estimated that a total of approximately 300 tons of DU was dropped on Iraq and Iraqi forces in Kuwait. The newspaper also cites the confidential report submitted by the United Kingdom nuclear authorities to the United Kingdom Government in November 1991, which stated that in places where enough volleys were fired, vehicle and ground contamination exceeded the permitted limits and constituted a hazard to local inhabitants. The report also said that the greatest hazard came from inhaling the fine particles of uranium dust produced when shells hit vehicles and set them alight. When a shell strikes, it added, a high proportion of the metal mass is converted into aerosol, which has particles that are easily airborne. They are also toxic to the kidneys and contain amounts of radiation which are hazardous to the lungs.

We should like to state that the competent Iraqi authorities formed specialist teams from medical and scientific research establishments to conduct medical, scientific and clinical surveys, and examine the effects on human health of the use of radiological weapons by the Coalition forces in the war

against Iraq. Unusual incidences of disease have appeared in Iraq, such as the abnormal increase in leukaemia cases, which are four or five times higher in number than in 1989. Children are affected in 75 per cent of such cases, reinforcing the belief that lymphatic blood cells are affected by radiation. Other diseases on the increase include lung cancer, cancer of the digestive system and skin cancer. There has also been a noticeable increase in congenital diseases and foetal abnormalities, such as babies born with extra limbs, with a distended head or without any head at all, as well as babies born with eye traumas or abnormalities, or with eyes that are completely concealed. Unusual cases of Down's syndrome twins have also emerged, as have bone deformities, genetic syndromes and the presence of abnormal chromosomes. There are also unexplained cases of hair loss and peculiar skin diseases in affected persons or persons who were in the vicinity of the areas shelled. The numbers of people suffering from severe attacks of dizziness, in conjunction with nausea and loss of balance, have also risen. In addition, growing numbers of people are suffering from distorted vision and partial loss of vision that is accompanied by severe headaches. Furthermore, there are unexplained cases of infertility in both sexes, and the number of miscarriages, stillbirths, premature births and difficult deliveries has increased.

I should like to refer to a report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/27) submitted to the forty-ninth session of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which took place in 1997. In paragraph 23 of the section containing comments provided by non-governmental organizations, International Educational Development, Inc. states that "DU may cause death and serious illnesses, disabilities and birth defects long after its war-time use in weapons. It remains in the soil, water supply and atmosphere for generations, rendering water supplies and agricultural land unusable. According to United States Government documents, short-term effects of high doses of DU can result in death, while long-term effects of low doses have been implicated in cancer".

The use of such weaponry by the Coalition forces resulted, on the one hand, in the deliberate mass killing of individuals because of the nature of the high-powered destructive fire, and, on the other, in people outside the theatre of war operations being contaminated and afflicted by unprecedented symptoms of disease because of the toxicity of the radioactive material used. Moreover, there is widespread contamination of the environment that is not confined to the areas which were shelled, but extends to include water, soil and air, which in turn has an adverse impact on human and animal health in both the short term and the long term.

Iraq places the international legal and humanitarian responsibility on the States using this weaponry, in particular the United Kingdom and the United States of America, for the serious effects on human health and the environment in Iraq, and for the suffering which will be endured, not only by the present generation, but also by future generations. Iraq therefore reserves its right to seek compensation.

We should be grateful if the present letter and the annexed report could be circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq

Appendix

The post-war environment in Iraq: unrelated medical phenomena - cancer, abortion, congenital anomalies, myopathy and neuropathy

A report on the use of depleted uranium weapons

1997

[Original: English]

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Impact of Radiation Weapons on Health

The population in Iraq was exposed to the explosion of thousands of tons of ammunition in the course of military operations of the US led allies. The ammunitions used were so immense and diversified, among which some were used for the first time in the history such as depleted uranium (DU). In addition to the severe direct effects of those weapons on civilians, their use caused a serious pollution of the environment. After many years, the long-term effects started to appear. Theses health effects were studied and the related data were analyzed. These effects include cancer, congenital anomalies, abortion, neuropathy and myopathy. Epidemiological and statistical studies are still being carried out to measure the extent of the immoral and illegal use of these weapons against Iraq. The collected data were tested for their statistical significance to assess their scientific value, and to prove the causal relationship of using DU with the impact on health and environmental pollution.

This report is not but a scientific proof put before the researchers and scientists for their consideration, and to enhance their work in this field in order to uncover the immoral and illegal use of DU by the US. The report, also, gives clear picture of the environmental pollution in Iraq which greatly affected and is still affecting the citizens of Iraq, specially in the bombarded areas. We put this scientific document before the world to reveal the intentions of the US aggression on Iraq. After all, will the claim of the aggressors that what they so call "Second Gulf War" was "clean"?!!!

The research included the following;

1- Field Environmental Studies

A- Many studies were carried out to determine the types of weapons and ammunition used and their impact on people and on environment. Special emphasis was given to the southern areas of Iraq that was subjected to intense bombing in the course of military operations.

B- A study revealed that vast areas in the south are polluted due to the use of radiological weapons. On top of the large

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number of casualties in those areas due to the instantaneous effect of these weapons, unusual diseases were registered later on. Also, many unexploded projectiles were found, among which was DU ammunition. (Fig. -1)

C- Tables 1, 2 and 3 clearly reflect the results of radiological pollution in the southern region, and present the material proof against the claim that the "Gulf War-II" was **clean**. !!!

D- The long-term effects of DU on the environment are still not fully developed. This presents a potential risk with time. This situation imposes the need to further field and specialized studies and research.

TABLE (1) Field Measurements at NORTH RUMAILA AREA

Radiation Exposure (Micro Roentgen/hr)

	Type of chosen sample	Background	chosen sample
1	Armored personal Carrier BMB-1	8.1	24.6
2	Armored personal Carrier MTLB	8.2	9.7
3	T-72 Tank	8.7	15.1
4	Rescue Tank	7.2	13.2

TABLE (2) Field Measurements at SHAMIA AIRFIELD / GUDAIRAT AL- AUDHAIMI AREA

Radiation Exposure (Micro Roentgen/hr)

	Type of chosen sample	Background	chosen sample
1	T-72 Tank	7.0	60.8
2	Armored personal Carrier (Watercan)	7.2-	60.3
3	Far away area from chosen sample (1) / T-72	7.1	7.3
4	Far away area from chosen sample (2) / Watercan	7.3	7.2

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TABLE (3) Field Measurements at DMZ and Surrounding Area

Radiation Exposure (Micro Roentgen/hr)

	Type of chosen sample	Background	chosen sample
1	Unexploded DU Warhead (near Karrange Oil Pumping Station on the Iraqi - Saudi border	7.4	83
2	Tank/T-55 (between cross road Nos 13 and 14)	7.6	21
3	Tank / T- 72 (No. 16107)	7.2	23
4	Tank /T-55 (Left of cross road No.9)	7.4	67
5	Tank/ T-72 (near international observation post between cross roads 12 and 13)	7.6	69
6	Tank/ T- 72 (South West on Mount Sanam)	7.0	65

2- Medical Studies

Many epidemiological and analytical studies were carried out on samples of unusual cases and diseases, and were statistically compared to control groups according to academic and scientific methodology.

2-1 First Study

A- This study dealt with five diseases; cancer, abortion, congenital anomalies, neuropathy and myopathy.

B- The study sample was selected from the cases that occurred for each of these five diseases for each governorate of Iraq.

C- For statistical analysis, a control group for each disease was selected from the same governorate.

D- Being subjected to bombardment or being in the bombarded regions was taken as in indicator in this study.

E- Five forms were carefully designed for this study. These included personal, environmental, social, epidemiological, health history, disease history and exposure to bombardment (place and time) data. The same applies to the control groups.

F- Data were statistically examined and analyzed to find out (Relative Risk), (Odds Ratio) and (Test of Significance).

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G- The total number of forms was (5764). Among those were (1314) abortion, (752) congenital anomalies, (667) cancer, (68) neuropathy and (81) myopathy cases, i.e., totaling (2882) cases. The number of control group was also (2882). (Table-4)

H- The study concluded that their is statistically significant relationship between the exposure to bombardment and the increase in cancer, abortion and congenital anomalies with odds ratios (4.6), (3.2) and (2.8) respectively. (Table- 8)

I- Diyala, Basra, Misan, Muthanna and Thi-Qar Governorates had the highest increase in cancer cases among other governorates. (Table- 5)

J- Nineva, Diyala, Baghdad, Basra, Misan and Najaf Governorates had higher increase of abortion cases. (Table-6)

K- Tamim, Diyala, Baghdad, Basra, Misan, Muthanna and Najaf Governorates had the highest increases in congenital anomalies. (Table-7)

Conclusions

1- The odds ratio in retrospective epidemiological studies had shown substantial deviation towards the exposure to bombardment and its relation to each of the five diseases that were examined in this study. The significance test assures that this relationship can in no way happen by chance.

2- The increase in cases and their geographical distribution among the governorates coincides with the actual bombardment and military operations and their intensity.

3- The cancer cases that had higher increase were leukemia, Lung Cancer, Ca Bronchus, Ca Bladder, Ca Skin, Ca Stomach for males and Ca Breast for females. This goes with WHO publications and the results of international research and studies on the impact of ionizing radiation. The increase in these types of cancers took place within three years after the aggression. Other types of cancer, such as CA Thyroid, needs more time to appear, 10-40 years after the exposure to radiation according to WHO literature.

4- The increases in abortion and congenital anomalies cases are

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considered to be rapid consequences of exposure to radiation. There are other congenital anomalies that continue for three to four generations for parents that were exposed to radiation.

Table -4 Sample and control groups for the five diseases according to governorate of Iraq

	Governorate	Abortion	Congenital Anomalies	Cancer	Neuropathy	Myopathy
1	Baghdad	44	42	16	4	13
2	Ninevah	90	30	39	14	6
3	Basra	42	94	31	28	10
4	Tamim	98	61	112	4	2
5	Misan	96	89	58	0	0
6	Anbar	92	77	54	3	12
7	Salahudin	97	51	39	3	2
8	Thi-Qar	98	76	45	2	6
9	Muthanna	82	15	42	2	7
10	Wasit	96	37	53	4	11
11	Diyala	97	42	44	3	6
12	Babil	90	16	30	0	0
13	Najaf	111	79	43	1	6
14	Kerbala	90	16	30	0	0
15	Qadisia	91	17	31	0	0
	Total	1314	742	667	68	81

Table –5 Registered Cancer Cases in Baghdad and other governorates

	Governorate	1989	1994	Relative Risk
1	Baghdad	4183	6427	1.53
2	Ninevah	1500	1629	1.09
3	Basra	180	461	2.56
4	Tamim	86	114	1.33
5	Misan	37	218	5.89
6	Anbar	51	95	1.86
7	Salahudin	90	94	1.04
8	Thi-Qar	72	489	4.01
9	Muthanna	27	59	3.18
10	Wasit	44	69	1.56
11	Diyala	69	134	2.19
12	Babil	73	166	2.27
13	Najaf	70	126	1.80
14	Kerbala	28	45	1.61
15	Qadisia	53	86	10.62
	Total	6563	10212	

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Table- 6 Abortion Cases in Baghdad and other governorates for the years 1989 and 1994

	Governorate	1989	1994	Relative Risk
1	Baghdad	6281	7729	1.2
2	Ninevah	2364	3440	1.5
3	Basra	2137	3618	1.7
4	Tamim	1458	1826	
5	Misan	1879	3196	1.3
6	Anbar	2351	2622	1.1
7	Salahudin	1611	1507	0.9
8	Thi-Qar	1491	2728	1.8
9	Muthanna	1015	707	0.7
10	Wasit	1234	1882	1.5
11	Diyala	1382	3314	1.4
12	Babil	1219	1724	1.4
13	Najaf	987	2480	2.8
14	Kerbala	1138	2316	2.1
15	Qadisia	1223	2627	2.1
	Total	27770	41716	

Table- 7 Registered Cases of Congenital Anomalies Abortion in Baghdad and other governorates for the years 1989 and 1994

	Governorate	1989	1994	Relative Risk
1	Baghdad	138	294	2.1
2	Ninevah	65	77	1.1
3	Basra	40	117	2.9
4	Tamim	45	122	2.7
5	Misan	41	86	2.1
6	Anbar	34	71	2.1
7	Salahudin	64	68	1.1
8	Thi-Qar	29	32	1.1
9	Muthanna	35	81	2.3
10	Wasit	49	54	1.1
11	Diyala	34	36	1.1
12	Babil	38	44	1.2
13	Najaf	0	1235	
14	Kerbala	25	27	1.1
15	Qadisia	37	42	1.1
	Total	674	2386	

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Table- 8 Odds Ratio of the exposure to bombardment for the study and control groups for the five diseases in Iraq

Cases	Sample size	No. of cases	control	odd ratio
Abortion	1314	988 75%	637 48.7%	3.2
Congenital Anomalies	752	463 61.5%	318 42.2%	2.8
Cancer	667	519 77.8%	224 33.5%	4.6
Neuropathy	68	63 92.6%	58 85.3%	1.7
Myopathy	81	77 95%	73 90%	1.4

2-1 Second Medical Study

Another study was conducted after analyzing available data for cancer, congenital anomalies and abortion cases for some governorates. The study concluded the following;

A- There is a statistically significant relationship (odds ratio=3.85) for the sample group of cancer patients compared to the control group. This proves that there is 'Causal Association' between exposure to bombardment and increase in cancer cases. (Table-9)

B- The study, also, concluded that there is a statistical relationship for the sample group of congenital anomalies cases compared to the control group (Odds Ratio=2.05). Statistically, this is considered to be highly significant, and proves that there is a relationship between exposure to pollution and the cases.

C- The above also applies for the abortion cases where Odds ratio was 2.9.

D- There is a change in the epidemiological pattern for the most prevailing cancer types in Iraq. Leukemia and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma became the 2nd and 3rd rank respectively, while rank of Ca Bladder changed after being the 2nd rank for a long period (25 years) next to Ca Bronchus. (Table-12)

E- The incidence rate for age groups (45-50) and (50-55) had

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become the highest after Jan., 1991. Prior to that, the age group (60-65) had the highest cancer incidence in Iraq. (Cancer Registry, 1976-1991, Ministry of Health)

F- New type of cancer cases had emerged. These types were not of did not have importance prior to Jan., 1991. These include Osteo Sarcoma, Teratoma, Nephroblastoma and Rhabdomyosarcoma.

3- Recommendations

A- Some types of cancer cases do not appear until a long period of time elapses after exposure to radiation. WHO, in its publication on exposure to radiation, estimates that period to be 40 years for Ca Thyroid. The same applies for other long term diseases and health problems that do not show until more time passes. This implies continuous monitoring and surveillance.

B- All medical studies recommended that research and studies should be enhanced and continued. They also recommend future prospective studies to be conducted.

4- Summary

In 1991, the environment in Iraq was exposed to the greatest ever damage due to the aggression led by the US. In order to highlight the extent of that damage, this report was presented to the exceptional session of the UN General Assembly on Environment and Development. All friends, international and humanitarian organizations are called upon to join us to overcome the burden of pollution caused by the aggression and the continuation of UN sanctions imposed on Iraq, and hence to put an end to this humanitarian catastrophe. And, simply because the environmental impact is not stopped by political borders, the damage does not affect Iraq only, but it as well, affects all the countries of the region and the global environment.

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Table - 9 Study Group for Cancer Cases vs. Control Group

	study group	control group
Yes	197	286
No	5	28
Total	202	314

Odds Ratio =3.85

Cause: Exposure to Bombardment

Table - 10 Study Group for Congenital Anomalies Cases vs. Control Group

	study group	control group
Yes	41	39
No	6	13
Total	47	52

Odds Ratio =2.05

Cause: Exposure to Bombardment

Table - 11 Study Group for Abortion Cases vs. Control Group

	study group	control group
Yes	24	41
No	3	15
Total	27	56

Odds Ratio =2.9

Cause: Exposure to Bombardment

Table – 12 Percentage of Cancer Types of the study group

Ca Bronchus	16.4%
Leukemia	14.3%
N-lymphoma	13.7%
Ca Larynx	10.6%
Ca Bladder	9.4%
Ca Skin	8.6%
Others [1]	27.0%

[1]Others include Ostetsarcoma, Tertoma, Medull blastoma, Nephroblastoma 3rd Ventricle Tumors, Rhabdomyosarcoma.

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Distribution of Leukemia in the southern provinces/Iraq

1989-1996

Province	1989		1993		1994		1995		1996	
	Total No. of cases*	Leukemia	Total No. of cases*	Leukemia	Total No. of cases*	Leukemia	Total No. of cases*	Leukemia	Total No. of cases*	Leukemia
Wasit	226	5.3%	200	7.0%	203	7.4%	191	7.3%	224	4.9%
Maysan	134	4.5%	129	6.2%	121	5.8%	81	7.4%	118	11.9%
Al-Qadisyah	176	6.8%	225	15.1%	185	13.0%	169	5.9%	145	6.2%
Dhe-Qar	283	4.6%	312	8.7%	274	8.4%	234	7.7%	248	6.9%
Al-Basrah	294	5.4%	294	8.5%	230	6.1%	319	9.1%	286	14.3%
Al-Muthana	104	3.8%	165	10.9%	112	8.0%	111	9.9%	99	5.1%

* Total No. Of different types of Ca. cases

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Fifty-third session
Items 55 and 65 of the preliminary list*

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Maintenance of international security – prevention of the violent disintegration of States

Letter dated 1 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am authorized to send this letter to inform you of the policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the national reunification on the occasion of the anniversary of the publication of the 4 July "North-South Joint Statement", 26 years ago.

It was a historic event that the north and the south of Korea agreed on the three principles of national reunification of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity and made it public as the "North-South Joint Statement".

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and the policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on national reunification attached herewith circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 55 and 65 of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) **Li** Hyong Chol
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/53/50

98-19481 (E) 090798

Annex

National reunification policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The reunification of our fatherland, divided by the foreign forces at the end of the Second World War, is the greatest national task for the Korean people and must not be delayed any longer.

It is only reunification between the north and south that can guarantee a complete and durable peace on the Korean peninsula.

1. Proposals advanced by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for national reunification

Ever since the division of the country by the foreign forces, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has advanced the reunification line of one Korea and worked hard to seek a peaceful solution to the national reunification by the efforts of the Korean people themselves.

At his meeting with the south Korean delegates to the north on 3 May 1972, the great leader of our people Comrade Kim Il Sung propounded the three principles of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity as the fundamental stand and method to settle the national reunification problem by a national effort in keeping with the desire and interests of our nation.

The three principles of national reunification are as follows:

First, national reunification should be achieved independently, without reliance on outside forces and free from their interference.

Second, national reunification should be achieved by peaceful means, without resorting to taking up arms against the other.

Third, great national unity as one nation should be promoted by transcending differences in ideas, ideals and systems.

The three principles of national reunification were agreed upon between the north and south and proclaimed solemnly to the public at home and abroad through the historic "North-South Joint Statement" of 4 July 1972, which enjoyed a unanimous welcome by all of the United Nations Member States at the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly in November 1973.

The three principles of national reunification of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity has become a major programme for the achievement of reunification and has been recognized internationally.

It is the reality of the Korean peninsula that different systems have existed in the north and south and neither side has been willing to give up its own system.

Such being the situation, the most reasonable way to achieve national reunification is to form a unified State in accordance with the three principles of national reunification set out in the 4 July "North-South Joint Statement", which transcend ideas and systems.

That is how we can seek the common requirements and interests of our nation from the principle of coexistence, so that neither side is conquering or being conquered by the other and that no side is overpowering or being overpowered by the other.

The great leader of our people Comrade Kim Il Sung advanced the proposal for founding the "Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo" as a unified national State following a confederation formula, based on one nation, one State, two systems and two governments, at the sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea on 10 October 1980.

The substance of the proposal for founding the Democratic Confederal Republic of Koryo is that the country should be reunified by founding a confederal republic through the establishment of a unified national government, on condition that the north and the south recognize and tolerate each other's ideas and systems, a government in which they exercise regional autonomy respectively with equal rights and duties.

The proposal for national reunification through confederacy is a realistic reunification method which corresponds to the trends in the international situation.

On 1 July last year, Hong Kong, with its own capitalist system, was turned over to socialist China. This shows that we can resolve the reunification problem based on the principle of retaining two systems within one country.

If the country is reunified through the proposed confederation formula, the arms race between the north and south will be discontinued and the Korean peninsula will be converted into a peace and buffer zone. We will remove the biggest flashpoint of war in the world, thereby opening up a decisive phase to ensure peace in Asia and the rest of the world.

2. The position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on North-South relations

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has remained consistent in its stand for improved relations between the north and south through dialogue and negotiation.

It was through the positive initiatives of the Government of our Republic that various rounds of dialogue between the north and south were held in the past and eight rounds of the north-south high-level talks proceeded in Pyongyang and Seoul, respectively, from September 1990 to September 1992.

The result was the adoption and effectuation of the February 1992 "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation between the South and the North" based on reconfirmation of the three principles of national reunification.

However, the north-south dialogues have yet to bear any results and the north-south Agreement, which was made after a long suspension of talks, has failed to be implemented. This is attributable to the south Korean authorities which commit themselves to the policy depending on outside forces and take a confrontational stand against the north.

The experience illustrates the fact that the north-south dialogue must not be the monopoly of a few men in authority or of a particular class or section, but must be a wide-ranging, nationwide dialogue that can pool the opinions of all political parties, groups and social sections.

The great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il, General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, made it clear on 18 April this year that the principle of national independence should be maintained for the improved relations between the north and south and that the north-south dialogue should be continued, on all accounts, as the one forum for national unity and reunification.

It is only when we adhere to the principle of national independence that we can defend the national rights and interests and shape the nation's destiny independently, in keeping with the will and demand of our nation.

Calling for independence and north-south reconciliation and unity while pursuing the policy of dependence on foreign forces is nothing but empty talk.

There can't be any justified need to have dialogue which will make the divided status permanent. Furthermore, there is not any absolute need to conduct contacts and exchanges of visits which will serve only for confrontation.

In order to improve the north-south relations, the present south Korean authorities should, among other things, make an about-face in policy by giving up the policy depending on foreign forces and exercising the policy of national independence.

What is essential in realizing free exchanges of visits, contacts and wide-ranging dialogues between the north and south is to get rid of all physical and systematic barriers, including the "concrete wall", the symbol of division, and the "National Security Law" in south Korea.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is prepared to meet, at any time, people from upper classes in power, figures from the Government party and the opposition party, big capitalists and Generals in south Korea to have open-hearted consultations over the reunification problem if they value the common interests of the nation and want the reunification of the country.

The United Nations should have a correct understanding about the reunification problem of Korea and stand in favour of the earliest reunification of Korea through the three principles of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity, which were agreed upon between the north and south and recognized internationally.

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Items 46, 59, 106 and 113 of the preliminary list*

Fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Advancement of women

Human rights questions

Letter dated 6 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the document entitled "Indictment by the Committee for Investigation of Damage caused by the Japanese Imperialists during their Occupation of Korea".

I would appreciate it if you could have the above document circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 46, 59, 106 and 113.

(*Signed*) Li Hyong Chol
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/53/50.

98-19513 (E) 100798

Annex

Forcible drafting of Koreans by the Japanese State was an enormous criminal kidnapping

The Committee for Investigation of Damages Caused by the Japanese Imperialists during their Occupation of Korea of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made public the following indictment denouncing the forcible drafting of Koreans by the Japanese imperialists as an enormous criminal kidnapping committed by the Japanese State.

Indictment by the Committee for Investigation of Damages Caused by the Japanese Imperialists during their Occupation of Korea.

It is already a well-established fact that the Japanese imperialists imposed great immeasurable disasters and misfortunes, pains and sacrifices upon the Korean people during their aggression and military occupation of Korea.

According to the data published so far, Japan kidnapped and arrested young and middle-aged Koreans, numbering more than six million, during its colonial rule over Korea and used them as tools for its war of aggression. It went to the length of committing the bestial atrocity of massacring them by the cruelest methods because it was fearful of the possible exposure of its barbarous crimes to the public.

The past criminal acts of kidnapping and arrest by Japan in our country culminated in barbarity and viciousness, the precedent of which has never been found in human history.

It is par for the course that defeated Japan should have investigated the truth of its kidnapping and arrest of Koreans, which engraved deep-seated enmity in the Korean people, and should have made an apology for such crimes.

The present century is coming to an end, but Japan has not yet admitted nor apologized for the unethical kidnapping of the Koreans it committed in the first half of the twentieth century. On the contrary, it is employing every conceivable means to bury the criminal kidnapping in oblivion. Japan is kicking up a racket against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea over the fictitious "suspected kidnapping" and is making an impudent foolish attempt to conceal its true colours as an assailant and, instead, to paint itself as a sufferer.

History can neither be falsified nor obliterated.

In fact, it is clear that reluctance to admit a past crime without drawing a lesson from it will lead to a repetition of the crime.

Today, the Japanese authorities behave in such a way.

The Committee for Investigation of Damages Caused by the Japanese Imperialists during their Occupation of Korea makes public this indictment to denounce the forcible drafting of Koreans committed by Japan and thereby to give a warning of the dangerous acts of Japan and to prevent the unprecedented catastrophe caused by the Japanese imperialists from recurring on this planet.

1. The forcible drafting of Koreans by the Japanese imperialists was an enormous criminal kidnapping committed by the Japanese State.

Japan is a crime-ridden country, a kingpin of kidnapping with a historical record of "kidnapping".

Historically, Japan has maintained its existence by getting engrossed in kidnapping, plunder and looting against other nations. And kidnapping has become its major State policy.

Let us give a careful scrutiny to the not-too-distant period of the Imjin Fatherland War (1592-1598), 400 years ago.

At that time, Japanese samurai had invaded Korea and kidnapped in groups a number of Korean technicians, experts and innocent people in a broad daylight.

Around 10,000 Koreans kidnapped by Japan were repatriated thanks to the superb diplomatic efforts of Yujong (Samyongdang) at the talks for the restoration of Korea-Japan relations following the Imjin War. This fact alone shows how many Koreans were kidnapped by Japan during that period.

Being accustomed to kidnapping, the Japanese imperialists abducted even the royal family members of the Li dynasty without any hesitation. In 1907, Hirobumi Ito, the then "Resident-General" of Korea, who was the ringleader of aggression in Korea, kidnapped Li Un, the Crown Prince and son of Emperor Kojong, to Japan. The Japanese rulers forced the kidnapped Crown Prince to marry a Japanese princess. In 1925, Japan also kidnapped Emperor Kojong's daughter.

In the twentieth century, the Japanese imperialists abducted and forcibly drafted young and middle-aged Koreans by dint of the Government and military authorities, which, in terms of barbarity, is the biggest criminal abduction, far surpassing the slave-hunting of medieval ages.

Forcible arrest of people by illegal means is precisely kidnapping and it is defined as a criminal act by the domestic laws of each country and by international laws.

The policy of forced drafting-kidnapping of the Korean people by the Japanese imperialists in the past is, indeed, a political and human persecution based on colonial plunder and purposeful national extinction, which constitutes a criminal act against humanity.

The motive of the Japanese imperialists for committing the forced drafting and kidnapping lies in the fact that it was a direct result of the adventurous war of aggression provoked by Japan itself.

As the Japanese war maniacs escalated their war of aggression, they were faced with a shortage of arms and labour.

The enormous human and material consumption incurred from the expansion of the war fronts completely drained Japan of its force of arms and labour, which the Japanese imperialists tried to compensate for in colonial Korea.

In order to conscript and draft the Korean labour force with Government authority, the Japanese imperialists concocted and enforced forcibly such evil laws as the "State Law on General Mobilization" (April 1938) and the "National Draft Order" (July 1939) in Korea.

When the Japanese imperialists suffered one defeat after another on the war fronts, they fabricated and effectuated evil laws, including the "Revised National Draft Order" (September 1943), the "Draft Order for All Middle-Aged Men", the "Student Labour Order"

and the "Women Voluntary Service Corps Labour Order" (August 1944), by which they forcibly conscripted all young and middle-aged Koreans, irrespective of their profession, age and sex, and drove them into a hell of drudgery.

At the beginning of the 1940s, when the war unfolded in scope, the Japanese imperialists openly committed kidnapping and forced drafting under the disguise of indiscriminate "draft" and "conscription" orders, shaking off even the veil of so-called "recruitment of labourers" and "good services of government" orders, whose forms, coupled with coercion and force, could find their precedents at the initial stage of the war.

The kidnapping method employed by the Japanese imperialists was a combination of abduction and power, the latter being the main play and the former supported by the latter.

One of the publications issued in Japan to disclose the truth of the situation noted that "First, the draft through ' recruitment' conducted by enterprises requisitioned a labour force by beguiling people with honeyed words, into a 'two-year contract'. Over 200,000 people were drafted through this recruitment method. Second, the Japanese Government-General of Korea and its body organ, the Korean Labour Association, used, in the main, the form of 'good offices of government' thereby drafting about 260,000 people. Third, the Japanese Government forcibly drafted through its conscription order. This was conducted using most brutal methods. It was, in fact, 'man-hunting'. Over 400,000 people are said to have been drafted within only a one-year period of the conscription order in 1939. It is impossible to say how many people were drafted by the time of defeat in 1945." ("Chosen Jiho" 29 March 1990)

This data represents a naked exposure of the craftiness and savagery of the kidnapping method of the Japanese colonialists, while characterizing the style of forced drafting of the Koreans as "man-hunting".

Kamada, a Japanese who had joined in forced drafting of the Koreans at the time, testified that "the most cruel one was the drafting of labour. As the war became fierce, gradually ... allocation of labour draftees became considerably strict. We could not attain the required number at all if we were to persuade them to come forward. Therefore, clerks in charge of labour from country offices or *myon* offices either made a surprise raid on houses where men slept late at night and early in the morning or drove trucks to take them unhesitatingly when they were working in paddy and non-paddy fields. Later, we sent them in groups to the coal mines in Hokkaido or Kyushu. We committed violent acts alleging that we could discharge our duty by so doing." ("Chosen Shinwa" Jawaitsiro Kamada, 1950 edition)

Those victims who had once been dragged off for the purpose of "draft", "conscription" and "volunteer service corps" unanimously testify that the process of their forcible requisition was not simply "recruitment", but forced abduction, kidnapping and arrest.

Mr. Pak Sang Jin, who had narrowly escaped death during a hell of drudgery after being kidnapped by the Japanese imperialists, attested to the process of his abduction to Japan stating that, "I used to sleep hidden on a straw mat at night for about one year, for I knew by hearsay that some people had been kidnapped in a sudden raid on their houses during sleep. However, one day I was caught. A clerk and a policeman from the *myon* office and a labour officer of the Saga Coal Mine were at home. When I was dragged to the *myon* office, they told me 'You must go to Japan as you are a draftee. If you work hard for three years, you can surely come back home.' Hopelessly, I was driven to Pusan where I saw about 200 people gathered. It was in 1943." ("Historical Materials from Korea Monthly", September 1974 edition)

Mr. Kim Se Guk, who lives in Daedongmun-dong of the Central District of the Pyongyang City, swore that "At the age of 14, when I lived in at Solmae-dong, Songjang-myon of Uiju county, North Phyongan Province, I was kidnapped by the Japanese imperialists to do unimaginable toilsome work. At that time, I used to attend the Simsang public primary school in Songjang. ... A few days before graduation, a Japanese teacher, Sadaru Kudo, called me and Jang In Guk to say 'You are to go to Japan' and forcibly took us to Sinuiju unexpectedly. He did not even accept our request to see our parents. When we were forcibly driven to the agency of a stock company in Sinuiju, there were already 80 young girls and 20 boys of my age. Like me, they were all forcibly abducted. There the Japanese put on a tag named 'Ryokichi Kaneda' around my neck. They even tried to deprive me of my name and make me their lifelong employee. Thus I was drafted to Japan."

The kidnapping nature of the forced drafting has been further brought to light by the investigation of forcible drafting of the Korean women as "comfort women for the army".

Mr. Seiji Yoshida, one of those who were in charge of the forced drafting of the "comfort women for the army", disclosed that their forced drafting as "comfort women" was ordered by the then supreme authorities. He went on to testify that "Over 1,000 'comfort women' had been forcibly drafted under my direct command alone. How we drafted them ... We called together all of the villagers at one place. Although about 100-200 villagers in all gathered there, we could only get four or five women draftees for the 'voluntary service corps'. Policemen mercilessly beat down the escapees with wooden swords. Women with babies on their back ran half-mad. But we separated the babies from their mothers and threw them to the old women. Then we grabbed the women by the hair and dragged them ruthlessly to a van. It is still clear in my memory even now that a 3 or 4-year-old kid was running after the van in tears. In a word, it was really a man-hunt ... To make it clear, we did not recruit the 'comfort women for the army', but kidnapped them by force. In those days, nobody willingly agreed to the recruitment for the 'voluntary service corps'. It was in Korea where we mainly abducted 'comfort women for the army' by force."

According to testimonies of the witnesses of the "comfort women for the army', who narrowly escaped death, the then Japanese imperialists took young girls hidden under their mothers' skirts and playing in house yards by force. They also abducted girls by cajoling them into good jobs. They kidnapped and drafted girls who went out to their relatives and even engaged and married women.

Kim Gun Suk, victim of the "comfort women for the army" operation residing at the Daepyong-ri, Pyihyon County, testified as follows; "I used to go to school in Seoul before liberation. One day in August 1938, I was caught in a 'girl-hunt' of the Japanese imperialists while playing at a park with my schoolmates Gyong Suk and Yong Ja. Three Japanese pounced upon us and took us to the railway station without any reason where they put us into a wagon like baggage to send us to Feng-tian in Manchuria." Ri Chun Hwa, whose address is the Township of Rinsan County, also testified, as follows; "One day in July 1940, a Japanese called Nakahara showed up at the landlord's house where I worked as a farmhand. He made a plot with the landlord and lured me out to the Sariwon station, saying that he would send me to a place to make good money. It was when I arrived at the station that I knew I had been taken in. Kim Yong Ja, who was born in Cholla Province and lived together in the same village, was put in the train. She was stained with blood all over because of the beating she was given by the Japanese. She was forced to go to the station while her husband was out at work. There were several such women."

That is why even the authorities in the "Government-General of Korea" could not but admit the kidnapping nature of the forced drafting of the Koreans committed by the Japanese

State, saying "the worst was the kidnapping of human beings ... took them by force as victims of war." ("Korea under the Pacific War" p. 25, (2))

The criminal kidnapping of Koreans by Japan, which took discrimination, contempt, maltreatment and murder of other nations as its way of existence, is nothing but an unethical and inhuman war crime which had negated the human rights and dignity of human beings.

2. Dual crimes of Japan in massacring kidnapped young and middle-aged Koreans in groups.

Samurai made a living by murder and war. As their descendants, the Japanese militarists began overseas aggression upon the seizing of power by the Meiji Imperial restoration in 1868, following which the Japanese modern history for the next 100 years was, indeed, recorded as the history of wars of aggression stained with blood.

Elated by the armed defeat of the Qing Dynasty and Russia in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, the Japanese militarists conquered Korea in 1905, occupied the whole of Manchuria in 1931 by fabricating the "18 September Incident" and, at last, provoked the Pacific War in 1941.

The Japanese imperialists made surprise attacks on and occupied the south-east Asian countries including Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines and many islands in the Pacific, one after another.

All the areas occupied by the Japanese army of aggression turned into places of deadly backbreaking labour, a living hell for the forcibly drafted young and middle-aged Koreans. In his report submitted to his Government, the former Director of Finance in the Japanese "Government-General of Korea", Naohiro Mizda, wrote as follows: "Since the outbreak of the war against east-Asia, we have sent considerably large number of Korean workers as the personnel necessary for ground and navy forces, the largest number being 32,248 as patriotic working corps for the navy for urgent engineering works in the southern region, at the request of the navy after September 1941. To meet the requirements of the ground forces, we sent 7,061 persons needed for the paymasters' department of the Northern Army, 3,223 for prisoner of war surveillance and 1,320 for the transportation department. We also recommended and sent many personnel to the Japanese islands, Manchuria, China and the south Pacific, not excepting Korea." ("Policy rule in Korea during the end of the Pacific War" pp. 155-156)

This report proves that the Japanese imperialists drove the forcibly drafted Koreans into slave labour on every front under their occupation.

Although it is still buried behind a black curtain, the "Voice of Asia" (Vol. 2, p. 84) counts 1-1.5 million Korean people as having been forcibly drafted to several islands of the Pacific and the southern area.

The Japanese aggression army took the forcibly drafted Korean young men and women as labourers for the military and "comfort women for the army" to all battlefields, posts, bases, ports and even out-stations of front-bases which they had occupied, including the Chinese mainland, Viet Nam, Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines and several islands of the Pacific, and finally massacred them in groups.

Here are some materials which show a portion of the killing and atrocities committed by the Japanese imperialists.

When the United States marine corps began landing on the island of Guadalcanal, where Japanese occupation forces were stationed in August 1941, Major Okamura, commander of the construction corps, drove more than two thousand Korean workers, who had been mobilized in the construction of an air-base, into the forest where they died of hunger or disease and the rest were shot to death for the reason that they would surrender to the United States army. ("The Last of Imperial Army" pp. 14-16)

Of the 121 dead Koreans who worked at Hajima coal mine, well known as a devil's island, 63 died from accidents and 15 from trauma-caused bruises and rupture of the intestines, which meant that they died of cruel torture by the Japanese. ("The Scene of Forced Draft, Contempt and Maltreatment" issue No. 5, 1980)

According to the materials, about 40,000 young Korean men and women met tragic deaths, 2,800 at Makin, 1,600 at Tarawa, 6,000 at Kwajalein, 7,000 at Kosrae, 800 at Maloelap, in the Marshall Islands; 1,900 at Iwo Jima; 1,200 at Saipan, 4,000 at Truk, in the Mariana Islands; 5,000 at several islands in the Kuril Islands; 1,500 at Kerama in Okinawa; 2,500 at Woorp island and 2,063 at New Guinea.

The majority of the forcibly drafted "comfort women for the army" died from physical suffering caused by the Japanese soldiers or were brutally slaughtered individually or in groups by the Japanese imperialists.

Arafune, former deputy speaker of the House of Representatives from the Liberal Democratic Party, once told the voters that "143,000 Korean comfort women died. They were murdered by the Japanese army."

These pieces of information illustrate how far the intentional massacre of the forcibly kidnapped and drafted Koreans by the Japanese imperialists went.

* * *

Forced drafting of young and middle-aged Koreans by the Japanese imperialists is the never-to-be-pardoned crime against humanity and the unprecedented enormous crime of kidnapping committed by the Japanese State.

The Committee for Investigation of Damages Caused by the Japanese Imperialists during their Occupation of Korea has presented here only a few materials related to the crimes of kidnapping, drafting and genocide committed by Japanese imperialism against the Korean people.

Several hundreds of thousands or millions of people have been direct victims of the kidnapping, drafting and genocide carried out by the Japanese imperialists. And such atrocious criminal acts have left indelible wounds and grudges for our people.

This notwithstanding, Japan, as the real criminal in the kidnapping crime, is indifferent to its past crimes and rather behaves itself as a thief who turns on the master with a club, kicking up a racket against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under the pretext of a fictitious "suspected kidnapping", against us the very people who are the victims of the crime.

It needs no further explanation that such a Japanese farce as calling black white cannot hold water at all in today's bright world.

The illegal and brutal acts on the part of Japan, which claims itself to be a "law-governed State", constitute a challenge to and a mockery of the conscience and justice of the world.

Eyewitnesses to the miserable history and the victims who were kidnapped and abducted by the Japanese imperialists to be forced into slave labour in a living hell and "comfort women for the army", used as cannon fodder of the Japanese aggression army, painfully cry out, denouncing their oppressors and vowing that they will never forget the most heinous atrocities committed by the Japanese imperialists, even after death.

Furthermore, the whereabouts of tens of thousands of abducted Koreans have not been discovered in the more than half a century since the Japanese defeat, while their kith and kin and friends have kept their fingers crossed for news of them every day, with deep-rooted rancour against Japan soaring beyond control.

The abduction, forced draft and genocide committed by the Japanese imperialists have been condemned and denounced in Asia, which suffered from horrible disasters due to the aggression of the Japanese imperialists in the past, and also in many other parts of the world, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Raised high, at the same time, are voices calling on the Japanese authorities to honestly admit to and apologize for their grave crimes committed before the humanity.

This is the manifestation of condemnation and just claims by the world against Japan, which is not willing to leave behind its past of crime.

Even after committing the grave crimes against humanity, unprecedented in the history of mankind, Japan has been accustomed to justify them and to shift the blame onto others. This brazen-faced act on the part of Japan can by no means be pardoned.

Although Japan is now desperate, in its mean trickery, to bury its past crimes in the darkness of history, justice and conscience will always judge history correctly and Japan will certainly stand on the stern trial of history for its past crimes stained with blood, whether it wishes to or not.

The Japanese authorities should know clearly that the longer they delay sincere reflection on their past of crimes, the louder the voices of denunciation of the victims and world conscience will echo, incurring greater cost therefrom.

The Japanese authorities should stop hanging onto such foolish manoeuvres as playing tricks and making plots, while ridiculing the conscience of the world by wearing the mask of the victim. Rather, they must recognize their full responsibility for all criminal acts, including the forced drafting of Koreans, and investigate and make public the true state of things.

Open-hearted reflection on and apology for the crimes of its own making are the only way out for Japan.

At present, it is a common task of mankind to safeguard human dignity and human rights to bring pressure upon the Japanese authorities to honestly admit to and sincerely apologize for its unheard-of crimes of forced drafting of the Koreans.

The Committee for Investigation of Damage caused by the Japanese Imperialists during their Occupation of Korea appeals once again to the justice and conscience of the world to lift up their voices of condemnation against the shameless acts of the Japanese authorities.

Pyongyang, June 22, Juche 87 (1998)

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Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Note verbale dated 1 July 1998 from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to request his assistance in publishing, as a document of the General Assembly under item 96 of the preliminary list, the Yalta Summit Declaration, adopted on 5 June 1998 at the meeting of Heads of State or Government of the following Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) countries: the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Azerbaijani Republic, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine (see annex).

* A/53/50

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Annex

Yalta Summit Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State or Government of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

1. We, the Heads of State or Government of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), have met in Yalta on 5 June 1998 to assess the progress of BSEC since its inception and the signing of the Istanbul Declaration of 25 June 1992 and to give guidance for its future course and development. We all share the conviction that the considerable progress achieved in our multilateral economic cooperation contributes to enhancing peace, stability and security to the benefit of our peoples, and that the time has come to consolidate the international legal personality of BSEC. To that end we signed the Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, an act which transforms the existing intergovernmental mechanism into a full-fledged regional economic organization.

2. We share the common view that in the twenty-first century the role of the Black Sea region, both in world politics and in the global economy, will grow substantially, owing to its strategic location and vast economic potential. BSEC should adapt itself to a world of overall transition and rapid change, embracing new areas of cooperation while deepening cooperation in the existing ones. This requires a new BSEC economic agenda for the future in order to meet the challenges of the era of globalization and information, to stimulate economic growth and innovation, to create employment and to build on the synergy that exists between our countries.

3. We reaffirm our commitment to trade liberalization and harmonization of foreign trade regimes, with due regard to World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and practices. We attach particular importance to the implementation of the existing agreements between the BSEC Participating States and the European Union (EU), as well as accession of all Black Sea States to WTO, as important first steps in that direction, and we appeal to EU and WTO to give BSEC the necessary support to achieve these goals. We also reconfirm our political will to establish gradually a BSEC free trade area as a long-term objective and to elaborate a plan of action for a staged process to that end.

4. We are convinced that the private sector should be the driving force for the consolidation of the BSEC process, so that the aim to complement cooperation between Governments through cooperation among the business communities can be achieved. We support the involvement of the private sector in the development and implementation of the concrete projects of interest to the BSEC Participating States.

5. We express our deep satisfaction with the establishment, early this year, of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank in Thessaloniki, Greece, which will be the main financial pillar of BSEC, and expect it to commence its operations soon. It will give a new quality to BSEC, whose activities are now evolving from the stage of project development into the stage of project implementation. We appeal to the international banking and financial institutions to support strongly the Bank and to consider ways and means to participate in its activities.

6. We consider project implementation to be of crucial importance for the consolidation and further development of the BSEC process, especially the implementation of projects that create new shared values and generate interaction among the interested States. In this connection, we assess positively the idea of selecting priority areas of cooperation and designating country coordinators on those areas. This new set-up will increase the efficacy

of project execution through a strengthened commitment by the Participating States to take the lead in their implementation.

7. BSEC will further develop its already established cooperation with the European Commission, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, WTO, the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other international organizations on the basis of complementarity, comparative advantage and subsidiarity. It should further elaborate the modalities for cooperation with the Central European Initiative, the Royaumont Process of Stability and Good-Neighborliness in South-Eastern Europe, the Process on Stability, Security and Cooperation in South-Eastern Europe and the South-Eastern European Cooperative Initiative and explore the possibility of establishing cooperation with other interested regional initiatives. We expect that the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation will be accorded observer status in the United Nations General Assembly.

8. In this cooperation, the BSEC-EU relationship is of particular importance. We welcome the conclusions of the EU Council of Ministers of last December as a first step in the elaboration of a comprehensive strategy of EU towards BSEC and its Participating States. We fully share the view that BSEC-EU cooperation in the fields of transport, energy, telecommunications networks, trade, ecology, sustainable development, justice and home affairs has a promising future. The ultimate aim is to shape progressively the European-BSEC economic area.

9. BSEC has gradually become an attractive partner for cooperation, for States from our region and beyond. We commend Austria, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Tunisia for their constructive participation in BSEC events as observers. At the same time, we express our gratitude to those States which have applied for membership or observer status and appreciate their desire to become a part of the BSEC family. We agree to discuss the issue of enlargement after the Charter of the Organization of BSEC enters into force. We will be in a position to address the issue of granting observer or other appropriate status to countries and a number of non-governmental organizations in due course.

10. It is our belief that now BSEC serves more than one purpose. It is an indispensable complementary means to accelerate economic and social progress and hence to consolidate the democratic institutions of all our countries. It is also a preparatory ground for integration into the united Europe of the twenty-first century. It presents a historic opportunity to build up, step by step, our common future together through mutual cooperation at all levels – State to State, region to region, people to people – so that the Black Sea region becomes one of the economic areas of attraction for investment, of prosperity and of stability in the next century.

11. We call upon national parliaments to ratify, accept or approve the Charter of the Organization as soon as possible, being convinced that the Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC will also assist in this respect. We highly appreciate the valuable contribution of the Parliamentary Assembly to the development of the BSEC process, for the prosperity of all and each of the countries here represented.

12. We express our gratitude to the Government and the people of Ukraine for their warm hospitality and the excellent organization of the Summit.